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STRANGE INHERITANCE

Fun and mystery when Norma moves into "Noah's Ark"

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Princess

STRANGE INHERITANCE

Of all the odd things to inherit - a cottage built like Noah's Ark! But if only Norma knew it, something stranger and more exciting still was in store for her!

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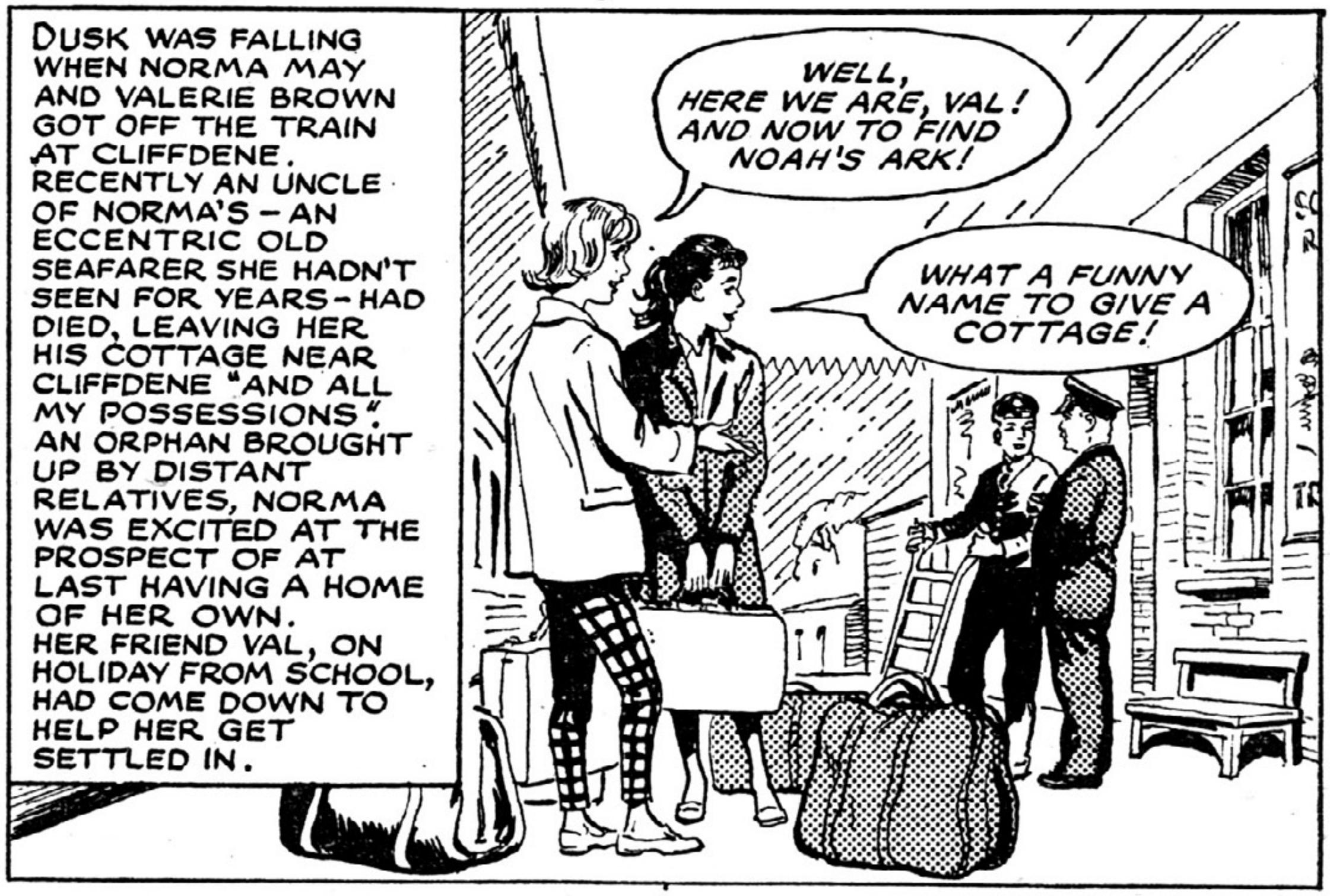
S.P.L.—156


DUSK WAS FALLING WHEN NORMA MAY AND VALERIE BROWN GOT OFF THE TRAIN AT CLIFFDENE. RECENTLY AN UNCLE OF NORMA'S – AN ECCENTRIC OLD SEAFARER SHE HADN'T SEEN FOR YEARS – HAD DIED, LEAVING HER HIS COTTAGE NEAR CLIFFDENE "AND ALL MY POSSESSIONS". AN ORPHAN BROUGHT UP BY DISTANT RELATIVES, NORMA WAS EXCITED AT THE PROSPECT OF AT LAST HAVING A HOME OF HER OWN. HER FRIEND VAL, ON HOLIDAY FROM SCHOOL, HAD COME DOWN TO HELP HER GET SETTLED IN.
WELL, HERE WE ARE, VAL! AND NOW TO FIND NOAH'S ARK!
WHAT A FUNNY NAME TO GIVE A COTTAGE!

UNCLE'S NAME WAS NOAH, YOU SEE, SO WHEN HE SETTLED DOWN ASHORE, I SUPPOSE HE CALLED HIS COTTAGE THAT TO REMIND HIM OF HIS MANY VOYAGES!

THEY ASKED THE TICKET COLLECTOR THE WAY.
NOAH'S ARK? YOU CAN TAKE A SHORT CUT THROUGH THE WOODS. BUT SURELY YOU WON'T BE KEEPING THE PLACE GOING – ALL ON YOUR OWN?
WHY, YES – I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT!

WELL, I WISH YOU LUCK, MISS! I'LL HAVE YOUR HEAVY LUGGAGE SENT UP TOMORROW.

IT WAS GROWING DARKER AS THEY HURRIED ALONG. THEN, AS THEY TURNED A CORNER IN THE WOODLAND PATH . . .
O-OH!

NORMA'S STARTLED CRY HAD BEEN HEARD. NEXT MOMENT AN ODDLY-DRESSED FIGURE RAN FORWARD.
DON'T BE NERVOUS, YOUNG LADIES. IT'S ONLY A FOX CUB, CAUGHT IN A RABBIT SNARE. HE'S HURT HIMSELF – THAT'S WHAT MADE HIM SNARL.
HE GAVE ME QUITE A SCARE! I'VE ALWAYS LIVED IN TOWN AND DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE COUNTRY.

THE TRAMP CLEARLY HAD A WAY WITH ANIMALS.
HE'S PROBABLY LOST HIS MOTHER, POOR LITTLE CHAP. I'LL LOOK AFTER HIM FOR A WHILE.
WE'LL LEAVE HIM IN YOUR CARE THEN, BECAUSE WE MUST BE GETTING ALONG TO NOAH'S ARK.

NOAH'S ARK? BUT OLD NOAH DIED A LITTLE WHILE AGO, AND I HEARD THE PLACE WAS TO BE SOLD!
SOLD? MY GOODNESS, NO! NOAH WAS MY UNCLE, AND HE LEFT THE PLACE TO ME. MY FRIEND VAL AND I ARE ON OUR WAY THERE NOW.

GOING TO TAKE OVER NOAH'S ARK, EH? A TOWN GIRL TOO! HOPE SHE KNOWS WHAT SHE'S LETTING HERSELF IN FOR!

LEAVING THE WOODS, THE GIRLS TURNED INTO THE ROAD AND ROUNDING A BEND, SAW . . .
NOAH'S ARK!
WHAT FUN! IT'S BUILT JUST LIKE A REAL ARK! GOLLY, I NEVER DREAMT OF ANYTHING LIKE THIS!

NORMA HAD BEEN SENT THE KEY. GREATLY INTRIGUED, THE FRIENDS WENT IN . . .
. . . AND FOUND THEMSELVES IN A COSILY-FURNISHED ROOM, WITH A STRONG NAUTICAL FLAVOUR!
WELL, YOU COULD KNOCK ME DOWN WITH A FEATHER!
IT'S A REAL GEM OF A PLACE! I WONDER WHAT IT'S LIKE OUT AT THE BACK?

IT'S NO GOOD EXPLORING NOW, IN THE DARK. LET'S HAVE SOMETHING TO EAT AND GO TO BED. I'M SLEEPY!
GALLEY
RIGHT-O ! WE CAN "TOUR THE ESTATE" IN THE MORNING!

TOGETHER THEY WENT INTO THE "GALLEY".
GOODNESS! WHAT AN ENORMOUS PLACE!
BIG ENOUGH TO COOK FOR A WHOLE SHIP'S CREW! WHY ON EARTH DID UNCLE NOAH NEED SUCH A TREMENDOUS KITCHEN JUST FOR HIMSELF?

THE GIRLS HAD BROUGHT A FEW SUPPLIES WITH THEM AND SOON HAD A TASTY MEAL READY.
OH, VAL, IT'S GOING TO BE WONDERFUL LIVING HERE - EVEN AFTER YOUR HOLIDAYS ARE OVER, AND I'M LEFT ON MY OWN.
MMM, I THINK I'LL TAKE SOME FRUIT UP WITH ME, IN CASE WE GET PECKISH IN THE NIGHT!

THE TWO CHUMS WERE SOON SOUND ASLEEP. BUT, IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT, VAL AWOKE SUDDENLY...

...TO FIND TWO BRIGHT EYES STARING AT HER FROM THE DARKNESS AT THE FOOT OF THE BED!

WHAT'S WRONG, VAL?

THERE, AT THE FOOT OF THE BED –
A BUSH BABY! WHAT A CUTE LITTLE THING! BUT HOW ON EARTH DID HE GET HERE?

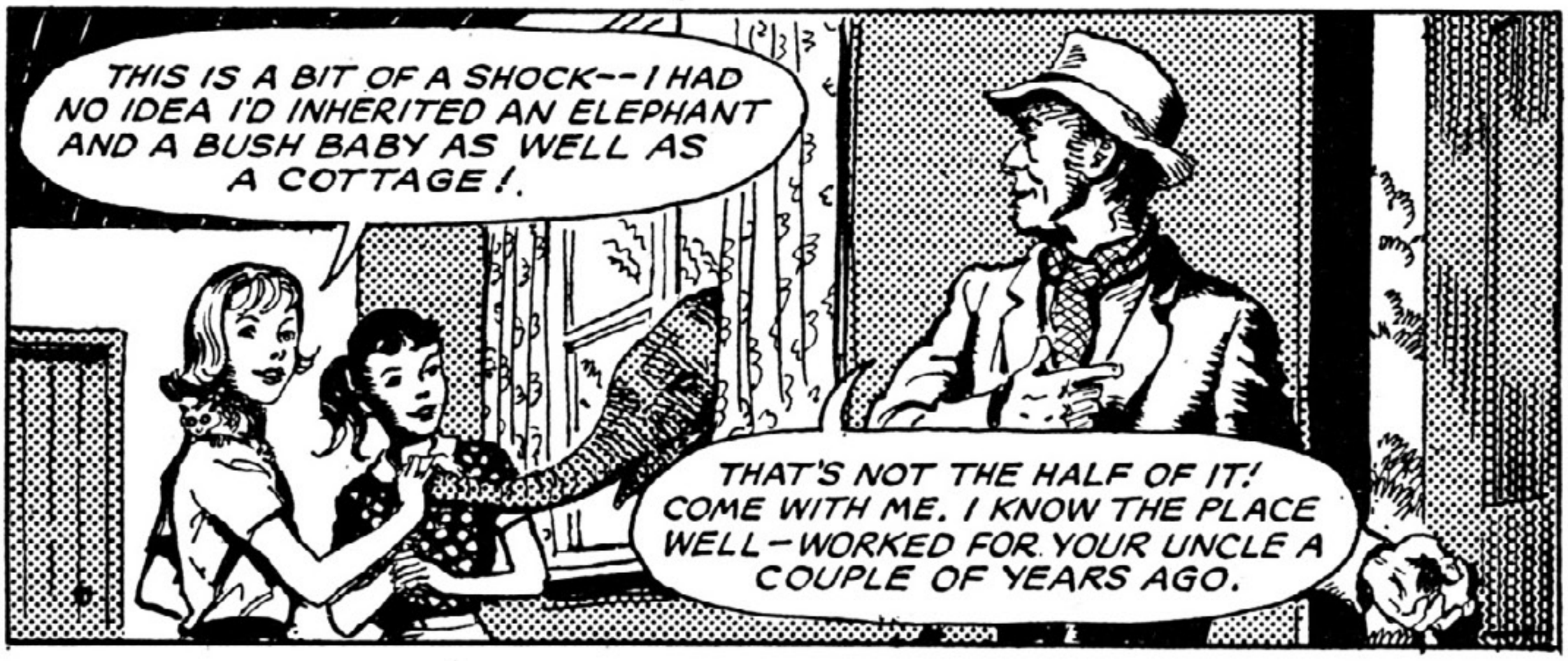
WITH A SUDDEN SPRING THE BUSH BABY SNATCHED UP A BANANA FROM THE BEDSIDE CABINET AND LEAPED ON TO NORMA'S SHOULDER.
HE MUST HAVE BEEN A PET OF UNCLE NOAH'S. AND HE'S HUNGRY, POOR LITTLE THING. ISN'T HE A POPPET!
YES, BUT HE DIDN'T HALF GIVE ME A TURN!

I THINK HE'S TAKEN QUITE A FANCY TO ME!
WELL, I HOPE THERE ARE NO MORE SHOCKS COMING FOR THE REST OF THE NIGHT!

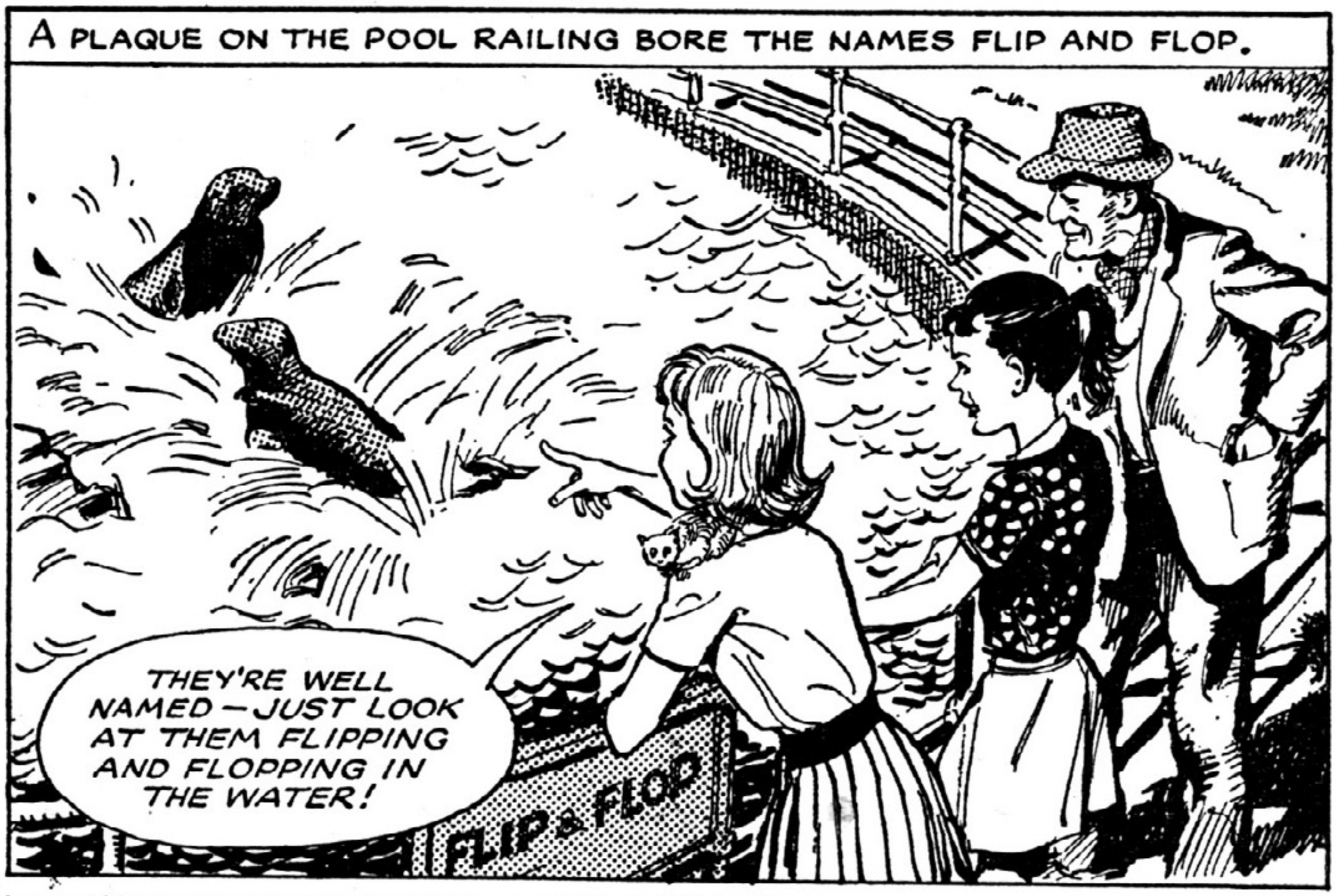
BUT THEY SLEPT PEACEFULLY UNTIL THE SUN STREAMED INTO THE ROOM NEXT MORNING, AND AS NORMA GOT BREAKFAST READY THE BUSH BABY PERCHED HAPPILY ON HER SHOULDER.
LISTEN, NORMA! I'VE NEVER HEARD SO MANY BIRDS.
AFTER BREAKFAST WE'LL EXPLORE!

THE GIRLS WERE WASHING UP WHEN A VOICE SPOKE FROM THE KITCHEN DOOR.
MAY I COME IN, YOUNG LADIES?
WHY, THAT SOUNDS LIKE THE MAN WHO HELPED US LAST NIGHT! YES, COME IN, MR.-ER-
JUST CALL ME BEN, MISS. SO YOU'RE GOING TO KEEP THE PLACE ON, EH? ARE YOU QUITE SURE YOU CAN COPE?
WHAT IS ALL THIS FUSS ABOUT? WHY IS EVERYONE DOUBTING THAT I CAN MANAGE THE COTTAGE? I CAN COOK AND LOOK AFTER MYSELF, AND-
SO YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'VE TAKEN ON! IS EMMA STILL HERE?
EMMA? WHO ON EARTH IS EMMA?

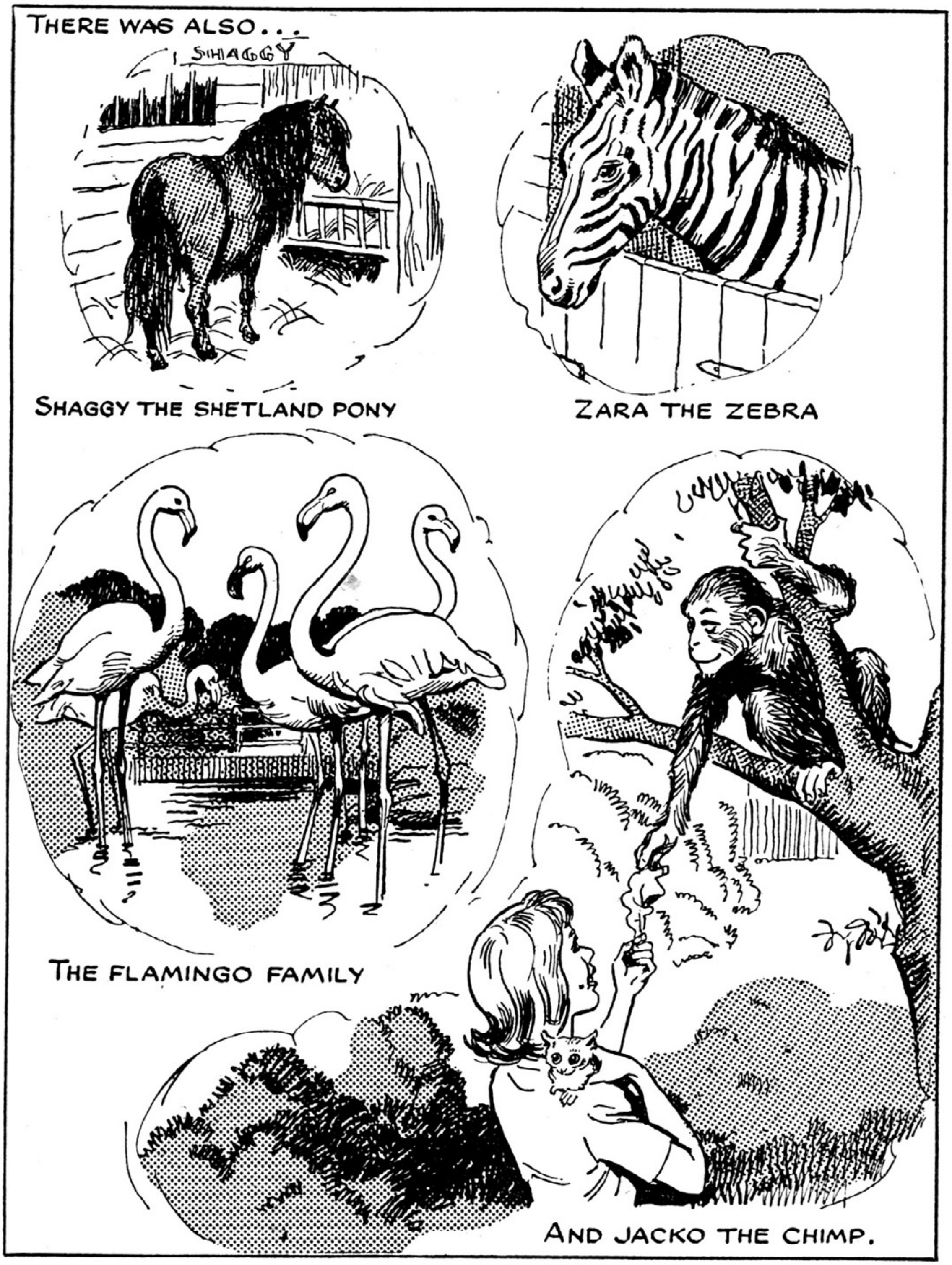
FOR ANSWER BEN CROSSED TO THE WINDOW AND CALLED OUT.
HI, EMMA! EMMA! COME AND BE INTRODUCED TO YOUR NEW MISTRESS!
NORMA AND VAL STARED IN AMAZEMENT AS HEAVY FOOTFALLS SOUNDED OUTSIDE AND A CURIOUS OBJECT THRUST THROUGH THE OPEN WINDOW!
HOLD ME UP, SOMEBODY! IT'S AN ELEPHANT—A BABY ELEPHANT!
MEET EMMA! HAVE YOU GOT A BUN YOU CAN GIVE HER?


THIS IS A BIT OF A SHOCK--I HAD NO IDEA I'D INHERITED AN ELEPHANT AND A BUSH BABY AS WELL AS A COTTAGE!.
THAT'S NOT THE HALF OF IT! COME WITH ME. I KNOW THE PLACE WELL—WORKED FOR YOUR UNCLE A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO.

BEYOND THE BUSHES SCREENING THE COTTAGE AN AMAZING SIGHT MET THE GAZE OF THE NEW GIRL OWNER OF NOAH'S ARK!
IT'S A ZOO—A MINIATURE ZOO!
OH, NORMA, HOW THRILLING! LOOK—SEALS! AND THOSE LOVELY BIRDS WITH PINK FEATHERS MUST BE FLAMINGOES.


A PLAQUE ON THE POOL RAILING BORE THE NAMES FLIP AND FLOP.
THEY'RE WELL NAMED—JUST LOOK AT THEM FLIPPING AND FLOPPING IN THE WATER!
FLIP & FLOP

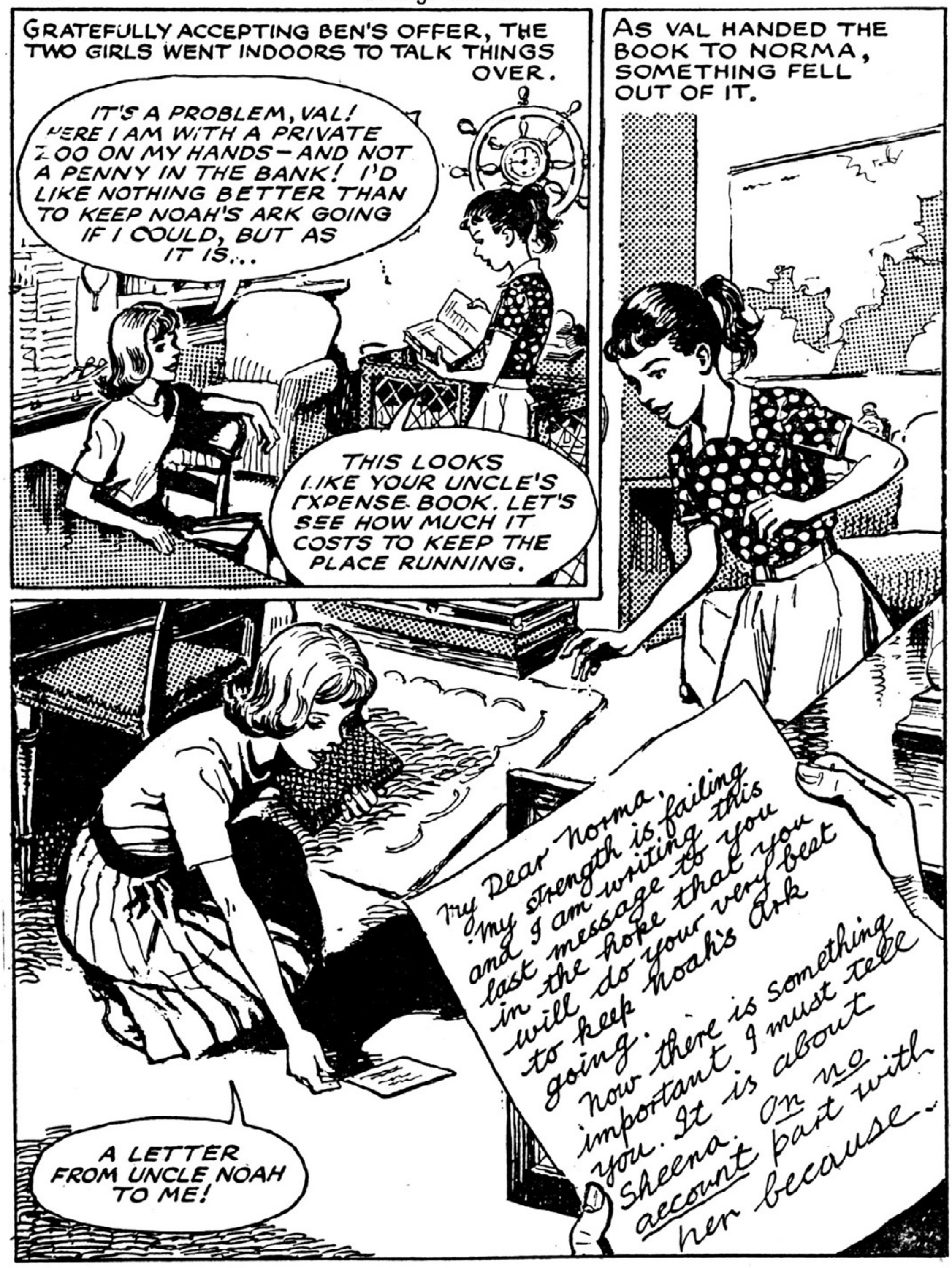
GERTIE. MM, A GOOD NAME FOR A GOAT! SHE SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN A LIKING TO YOU, BEN.
THEY ALL KNOW YOUR UNCLE USED TO CARRY LITTLE TITBITS FOR THEM IN HIS POCKETS.

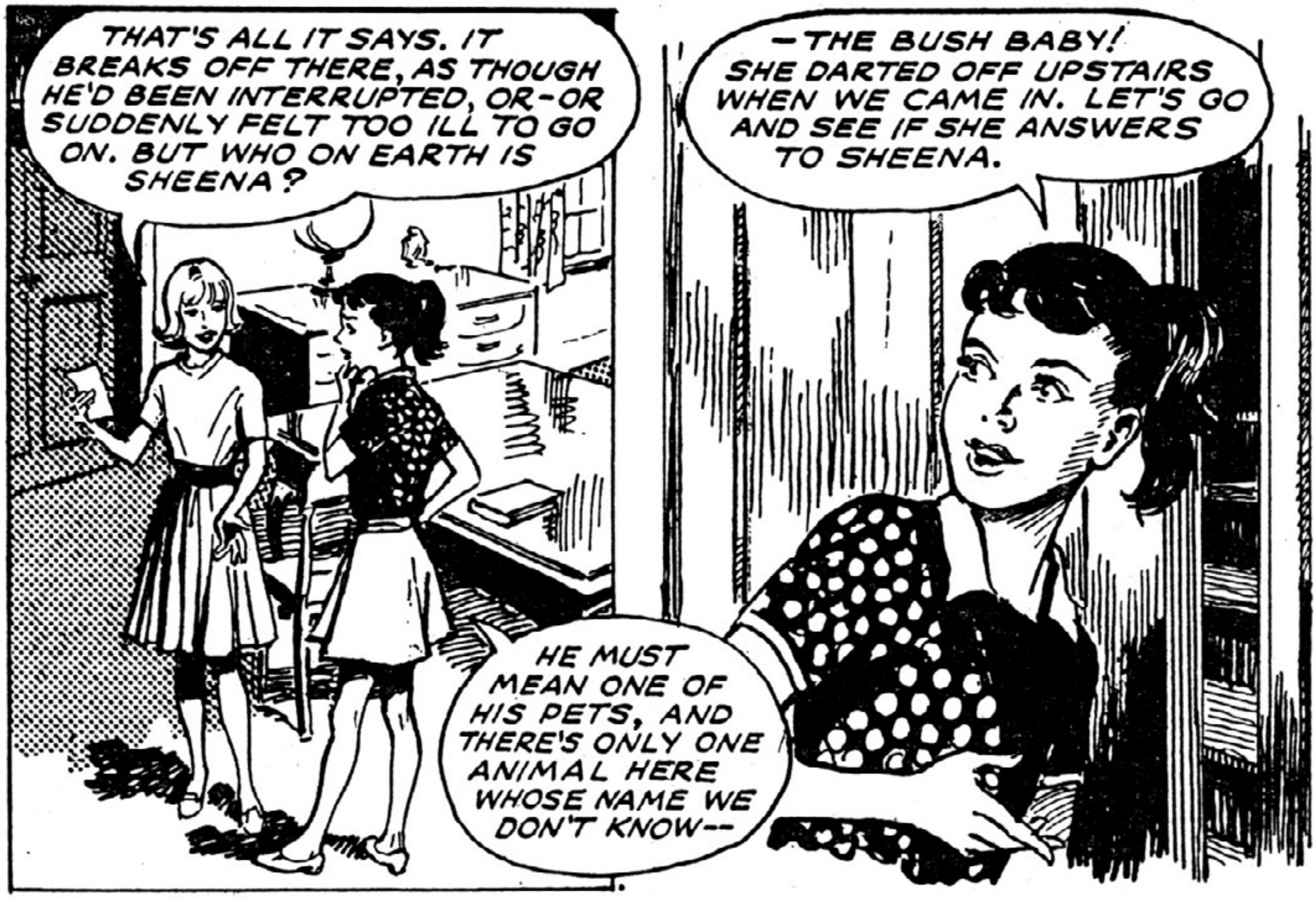

THERE WAS ALSO...
SHAGGY
SHAGGY THE SHETLAND PONY
ZARA THE ZEBRA
THE FLAMINGO FAMILY
AND JACKO THE CHIMP.

AND WHEN THEY HAD MET ALL THE ANIMALS . . .
I FEEL IN A BIT OF A DAZE! I NEVER DREAMT... BUT WHO'S BEEN LOOKING AFTER ALL THIS SINCE – SINCE UNCLE DIED?
A MAN CALLED FRED. BUT YOUR UNCLE'S SOLICITOR, MR. STANTON, PAID HIM OFF YESTERDAY, TELLING HIM THE ARK WAS TO BE SOLD.

HE SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT! NOW I KNOW ABOUT THE ZOO, I CAN UNDERSTAND. MR. STANTON MIGHT HAVE THOUGHT IT WAS TOO MUCH FOR ME TO HANDLE, BUT HE SHOULD HAVE CONSULTED ME!
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO, NORMA? WILL YOU SELL?

I'LL HAVE TO THINK, VAL.
THERE'S SURE TO BE FODDER IN ONE OF THE SHEDS. I'LL SEE TO THE ANIMALS IF YOU LIKE, MISS.


GRATEFULLY ACCEPTING BEN'S OFFER, THE TWO GIRLS WENT INDOORS TO TALK THINGS OVER.
IT'S A PROBLEM, VAL! HERE I AM WITH A PRIVATE ZOO ON MY HANDS—AND NOT A PENNY IN THE BANK! I'D LIKE NOTHING BETTER THAN TO KEEP NOAH'S ARK GOING IF I COULD, BUT AS IT IS...
THIS LOOKS LIKE YOUR UNCLE'S EXPENSE BOOK. LET'S SEE HOW MUCH IT COSTS TO KEEP THE PLACE RUNNING.
AS VAL HANDED THE BOOK TO NORMA, SOMETHING FELL OUT OF IT.
My Dear Norma,
My strength is failing and I am writing this last message to you in the hope that you will do your very best to keep Noah's Ark going. There is something now that I must tell you. It is about Sheena. On no account part with her because...
A LETTER FROM UNCLE NOAH TO ME!


THAT'S ALL IT SAYS. IT BREAKS OFF THERE, AS THOUGH HE'D BEEN INTERRUPTED, OR-OR SUDDENLY FELT TOO ILL TO GO ON. BUT WHO ON EARTH IS SHEENA?
HE MUST MEAN ONE OF HIS PETS, AND THERE'S ONLY ONE ANIMAL HERE WHOSE NAME WE DON'T KNOW--
—THE BUSH BABY! SHE DARTED OFF UPSTAIRS WHEN WE CAME IN. LET'S GO AND SEE IF SHE ANSWERS TO SHEENA.

THEY FOUND THE TINY LITTLE CREATURE CURLED UP IN THE POCKET OF NORMA'S PYJAMA JACKET.
OF COURSE, BUSH BABIES ARE NIGHT-TIME ANIMALS. THEY SLEEP BY DAY.
WE'VE WOKEN HER UP-LOOK!

FAR FROM ANSWERING TO THE NAME OF SHEENA, THE BUSH BABY PROMPTLY CLOSED HER HUGE BROWN EYES AND WENT TO SLEEP AGAIN!
THAT'S THAT! IT'S PRETTY CLEAR THE NAME'S NOT HERS.
IT DIDN'T SEEM TO SUIT HER, ANYWAY. SHE'S SUCH A WEE THING-LET'S CALL HER TUPPENNY!

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT, VAL. IT'S OBVIOUS FROM UNCLE NOAH'S NOTE THAT THERE'S SOME SPECIAL REASON WHY HE WANTED ME TO KEEP THIS SHEENA – BUT IT SEEMS AS IF SHEENA'S NOT EVEN HERE!
YES, IT'S A PUZZLER. BUT– WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT THE ZOO, NORMA?

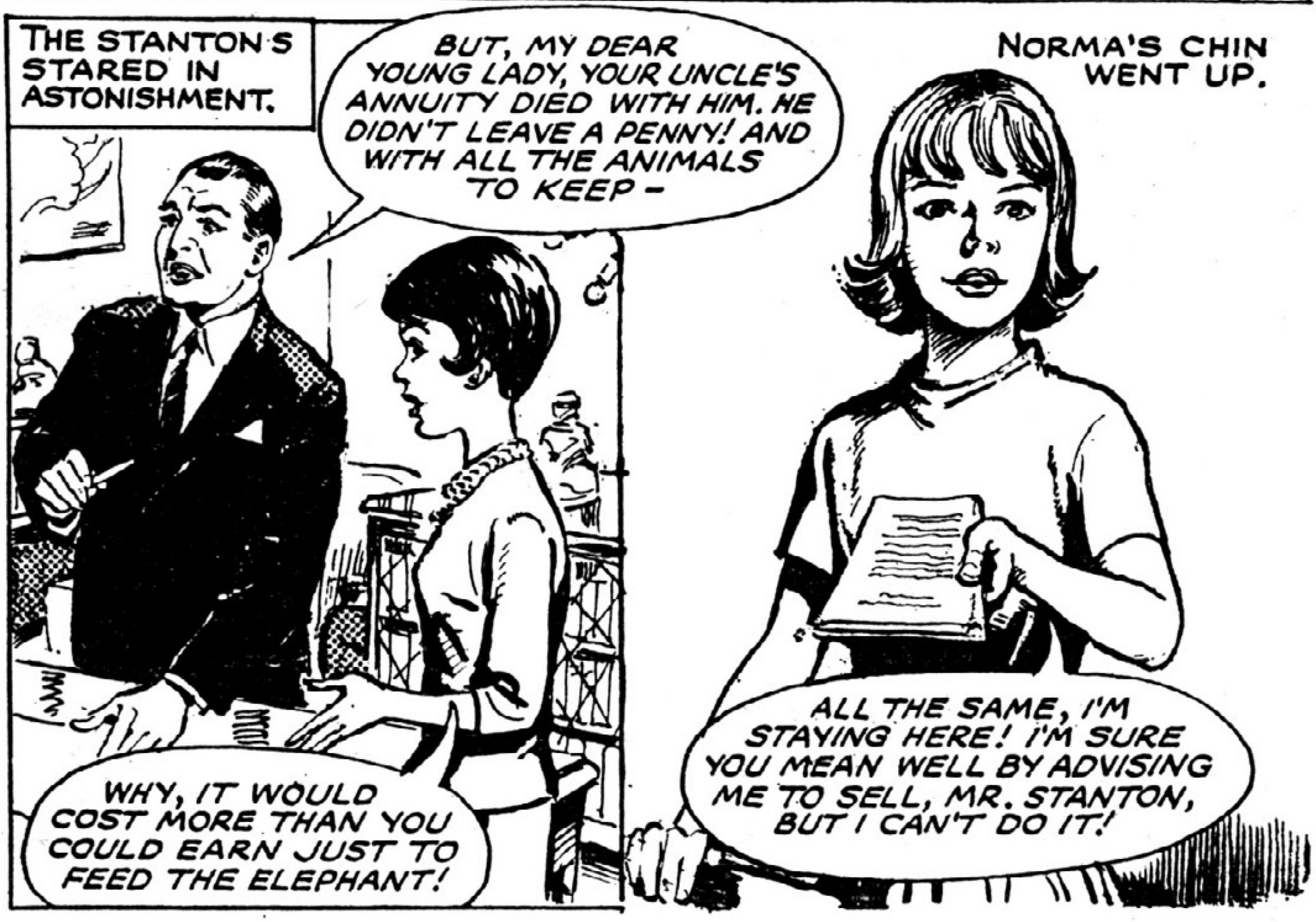
UNCLE'S LETTER HAS MADE UP MY MIND. HE TRUSTED THE ARK TO ME. IT MAY NOT BE EASY, BUT I'M GOING TO DO ALL I CAN TO CARRY ON AS HE WANTED!
GOOD FOR YOU, MISS NORMA. AND IF YOU'D LIKE MY HELP, IT'S YOURS. I'VE WORKED A LOT WITH ANIMALS – IN A CIRCUS AS WELL AS WITH YOUR UNCLE NOAH.

I COULD MAKE MYSELF COMFORTABLE IN ONE OF THE OUTBUILDINGS. OLD NOAH WAS A GOOD FRIEND TO ME—I'D BE GLAD TO HELP YOU OUT.
THANK YOU, BEN—I'D LOVE YOU TO STAY! AND NOW PERHAPS YOU CAN SOLVE A MYSTERY FOR ME...

NORMA EXPLAINED ABOUT HER UNCLE'S LETTER AND THE MISSING SHEENA, BUT BEN SHOOK HIS HEAD.
SORRY, MISS NORMA. THE NAME MEANS NOTHING TO ME—THOUGH OF COURSE IT'S A COUPLE OF YEARS SINCE I WORKED HERE.

BEN HAD BEEN STAYING WITH A GAMEKEEPER FRIEND WHO LIVED NEARBY. HE WENT OFF TO COLLECT HIS BELONGINGS AND, SOON AFTER, NORMA HAD VISITORS.
AH, MISS MAY! I AM MR. STANTON, YOUR LATE UNCLE'S SOLICITOR, AND THIS IS MY DAUGHTER, LENA.
GOOD MORNING, MR. STANTON. PLEASE COME IN.

THE SOLICITOR TOOK A DOCUMENT FROM HIS BRIEFCASE.
HERE YOU ARE, MISS MAY– A DEED OF SALE. JUST SIGN HERE. I HAVE A BUYER LINED UP TO TAKE OVER THE PROPERTY.
INDEED, MR. STANTON! I AM AFRAID THERE'S SOME MISTAKE. I'VE NO INTENTION OF SELLING NOAH'S ARK–AND YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE PAID OFF THE MAN WHO WAS WORKING HERE!

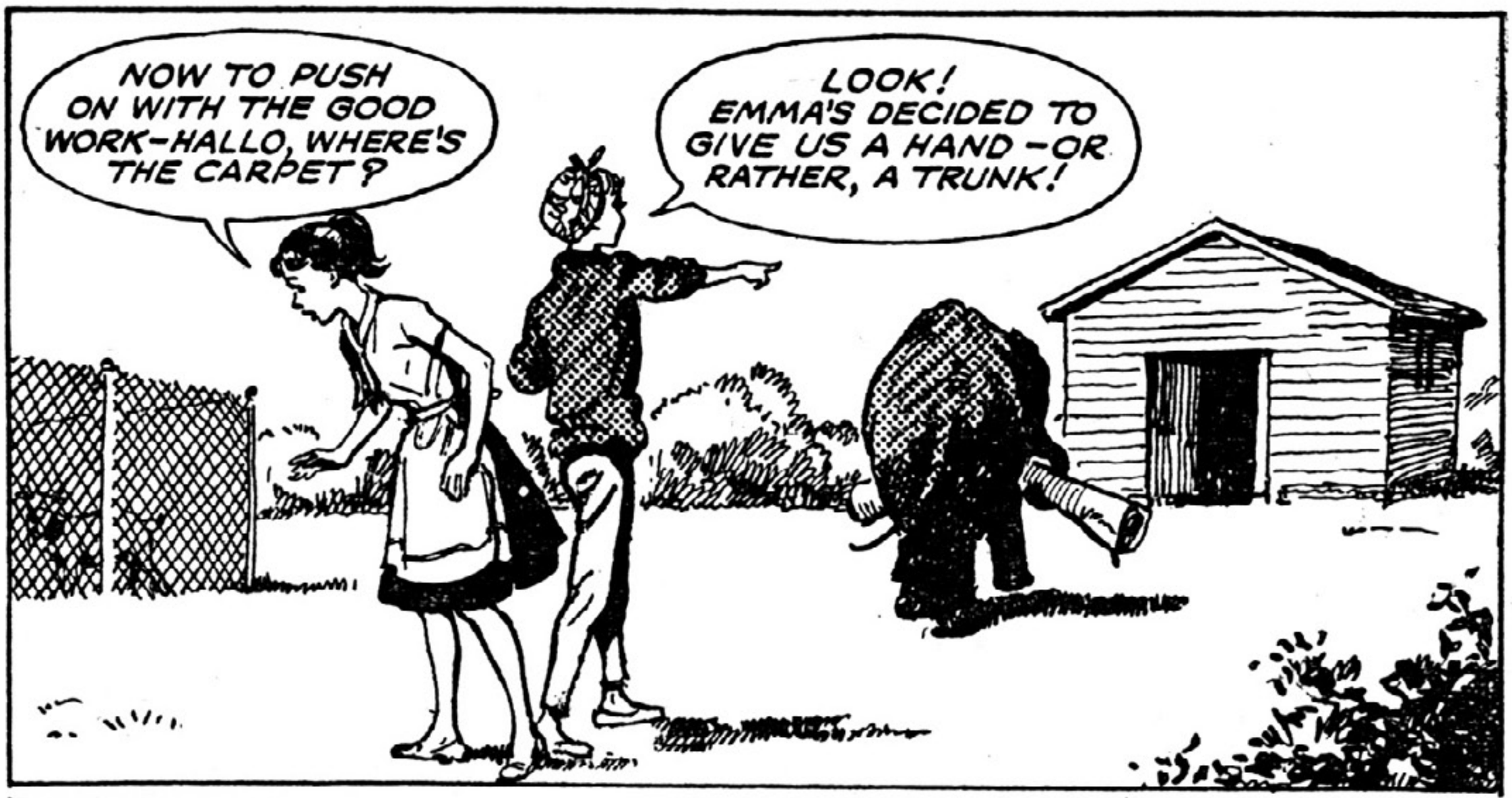

THE STANTON'S STARED IN ASTONISHMENT.
BUT, MY DEAR YOUNG LADY, YOUR UNCLE'S ANNUITY DIED WITH HIM. HE DIDN'T LEAVE A PENNY! AND WITH ALL THE ANIMALS TO KEEP –
WHY, IT WOULD COST MORE THAN YOU COULD EARN JUST TO FEED THE ELEPHANT!
NORMA'S CHIN WENT UP.
ALL THE SAME, I'M STAYING HERE! I'M SURE YOU MEAN WELL BY ADVISING ME TO SELL, MR. STANTON, BUT I CAN'T DO IT!

WITH A STIFF SMILE, THE SOLICITOR TURNED AND LEFT – BUT AS SOON AS HE GOT OUTSIDE HIS FACE TWISTED IN FURY!
CONFOUND THE GIRL! SHE'S GOING TO BE MORE DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH THAN I EXPECTED. BUT I WANT NOAH'S ARK – YOU KNOW WHY, LENA – AND I'M GOING TO GET IT!

NORMA, MEANTIME, WAS GOING INTO ACTION.
COME ON, VAL! LET'S SURPRISE BEN BY HAVING HIS QUARTERS ALL SHIPSHAPE BY THE TIME HE GETS BACK! THAT SMALL, EMPTY OUTHOUSE WE SAW SHOULD BE IDEAL.

THEY SET TO ENTHUSIASTICALLY, SCRUBBING AND SWEEPING, AND AN HOUR LATER...
PHEW! THIS CARPET'S HEAVY!
LET'S HAVE A BREATHER.
HI, YOU TWO GIRLS! WHICH OF YOU IS NORMA MAY?

NORMA AND VAL SWUNG ROUND AT THE CRY.
J.SHORT. VETERINARY SURGEON
I'M NORMA MAY
THEN I EXPECT YOU'VE BEEN WONDERING WHERE YOUR UNCLE'S CAT, SHEENA, HAS GOT TO. WE'VE BEEN KEEPING HER DOWN AT THE VET'S TILL THINGS WERE SETTLED. SHE'S IN THE VAN NOW.
SO THE MYSTERY OF SHEENA IS SOLVED AT LAST!
WE MIGHT HAVE GUESSED AN OLD SEA-SALT WOULD KEEP A CAT!
YOU'LL FIND THE BACK DOOR OPEN. WOULD YOU LEAVE HER IN THE KITCHEN, PLEASE? WE'RE RATHER BUSY.


NOW TO PUSH ON WITH THE GOOD WORK—HALLO, WHERE'S THE CARPET?
LOOK! EMMA'S DECIDED TO GIVE US A HAND—OR RATHER, A TRUNK!

PRESENTLY...
WELL, I THINK IT LOOKS JOLLY NICE! NOW LET'S GO AND HAVE A LOOK AT SHEENA—SEE WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT HER.
COME ALONG, JACKO, WE DON'T WANT YOU PLAYING ANY TRICKS IN HERE!

ABOUT TO OPEN THE KITCHEN DOOR, NORMA HAPPENED TO GLANCE THROUGH THE WINDOW...
OH, MY GOODNESS!
WHAT'S UP, NORMA?
IT'S SHEENA! SHE'S A BIG CAT, ALL RIGHT-- SHE'S A CHEETAH!
THEY WERE STAGGERED! THEY COULDN'T BELIEVE IT! YET THERE WAS THE CHEETAH, OVER A HUNDRED POWERFUL POUNDS OF HER!
OH, MY GIDDY AUNT!

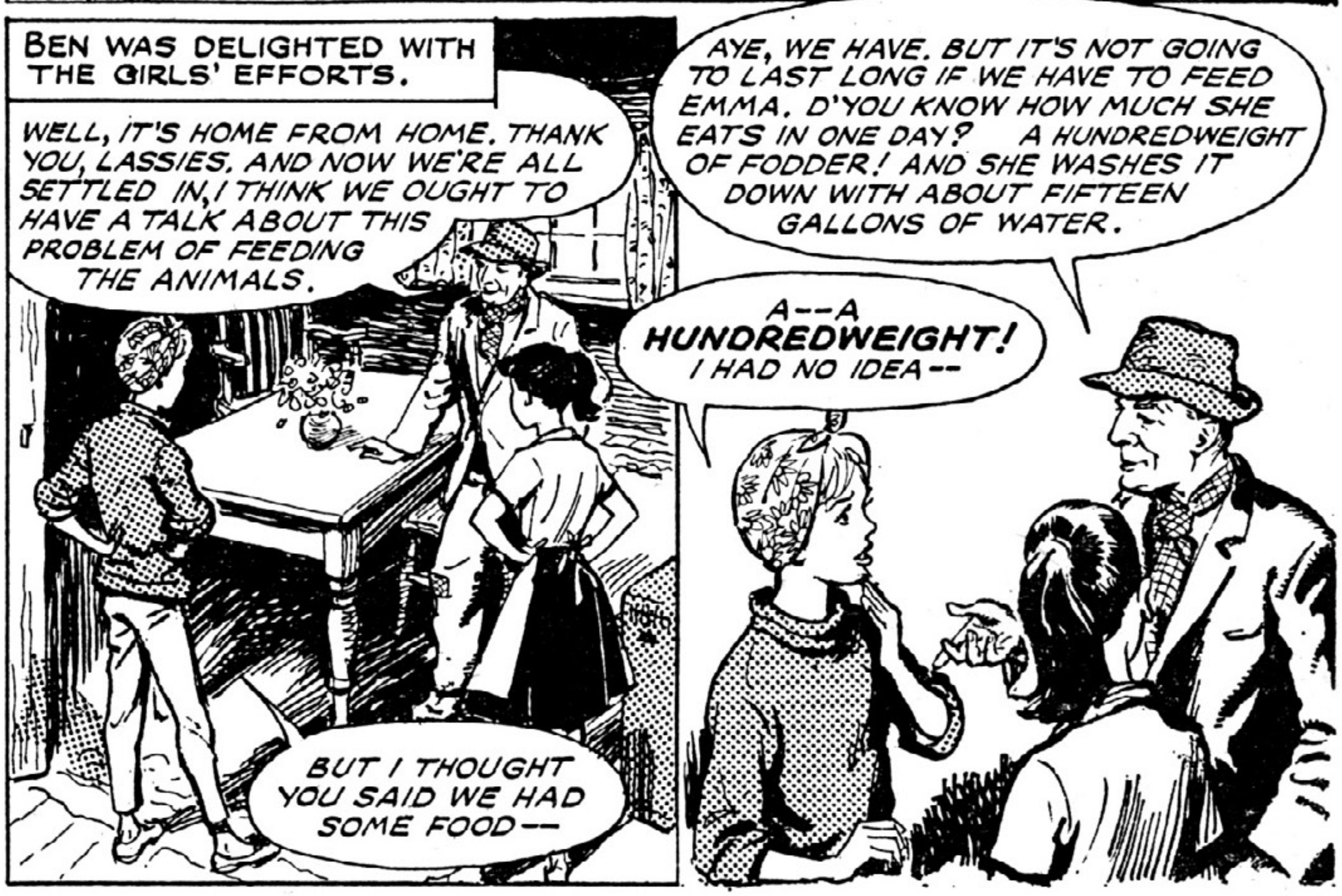
THE KITCHEN WINDOW WAS SLIGHTLY OPEN. BEFORE THEY COULD STOP HIM, JACKO HAD LEAPED INSIDE!
JACKO! COME BACK!

THE TWO GIRLS HELD THEIR BREATH— BUT THE CHIMP WASN'T A BIT CONCERNED! HE CHATTERED AT SHEENA — WHO MERELY STARED AT HIM FOR A MOMENT AND THEN GAVE HIM A FRIENDLY PAT!

WELL, IT LOOKS AS IF THOSE TWO HAVE MET BEFORE. I'D SAY AT A GUESS THAT'S THE MYSTERIOUS SHEENA, EH?
BEN--YOU'RE BACK! YES, THAT'S SHEENA-- THE VET HAD HER. BUT WHAT ON EARTH ARE WE GOING TO DO?

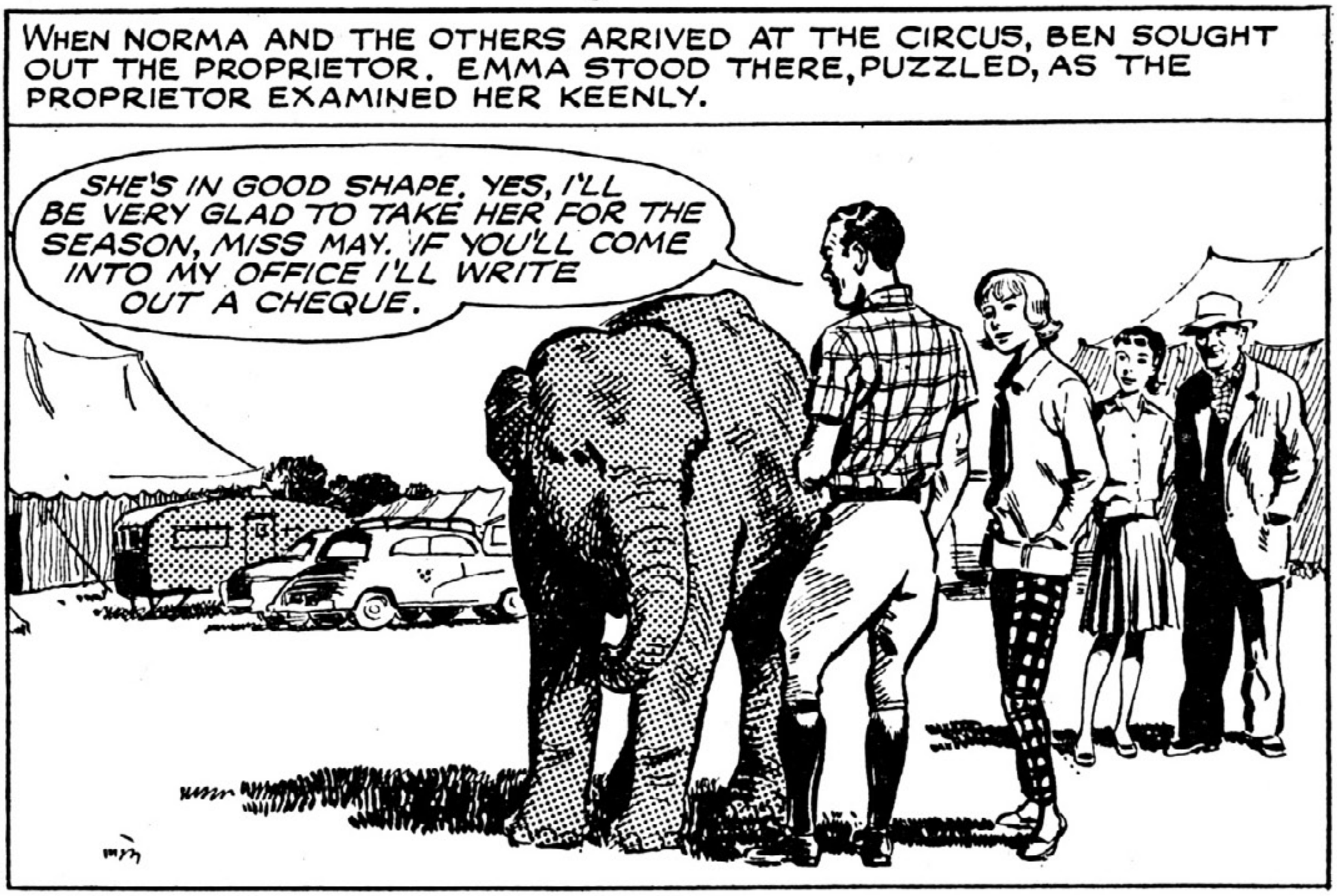
BEN OPENED THE WINDOW WIDER-- LEANED INSIDE. THE CHEETAH SEEMED QUITE UNDISTURBED, SO BEN UNLATCHED THE KITCHEN DOOR AND WENT IN CAUTIOUSLY.
I THINK IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT. YOUR UNCLE WOULD NEVER HAVE KEPT A CHEETAH IF SHE WASN'T SAFE.
SHE DOESN'T KNOW ANY OF US, THOUGH...
SHEENA GAZED AT THEM CALMLY. THEN, WITH SINEWY STRIDE, SHE STRODE ACROSS AND RUBBED HER HEAD AGAINST NORMA.
WELL, IT ALMOST SEEMS SHE KNOWS YOU'RE OLD NOAH'S NIECE!
I'M WEARING ONE OF UNCLE'S OLD PULLOVERS--MAYBE SHE SCENTED IT!
PHEW! FOR A MOMENT I THOUGHT WE WERE GOING TO MAKE A THREE-COURSE SUPPER!
THEY FOLLOWED CURIOUSLY AS SHEENA PADDED OUT OF THE KITCHEN AND THROUGH THE GROUNDS. EMMA GAVE A SQUEAL OF DELIGHT AS THEY PASSED.
SHE SEEMS TO KNOW HER WAY ABOUT--WONDER WHERE SHE'S OFF TO?
EMMA RECOGNISES HER ALL RIGHT!

AT THE FAR END OF THE GROUNDS SHEENA ENTERED A CAVE.
IT MUST BE HER HOME--AND LOOK, THIS PROBABLY EXPLAINS WHY YOUR UNCLE DIDN'T WANT YOU TO PART WITH HER.
SO THAT'S THE MYSTERY OF SHEENA SOLVED!
AND NOW I SUGGEST WE SHOW BEN HIS NEW QUARTERS.
SHEENA. PRESENTED TO NOAH MAY BY H.H. THE RAJAH OF RAJIPORE.


BEN WAS DELIGHTED WITH THE GIRLS' EFFORTS.
WELL, IT'S HOME FROM HOME. THANK YOU, LASSIES. AND NOW WE'RE ALL SETTLED IN, I THINK WE OUGHT TO HAVE A TALK ABOUT THIS PROBLEM OF FEEDING THE ANIMALS.
BUT I THOUGHT YOU SAID WE HAD SOME FOOD--
AYE, WE HAVE. BUT IT'S NOT GOING TO LAST LONG IF WE HAVE TO FEED EMMA. D'YOU KNOW HOW MUCH SHE EATS IN ONE DAY? A HUNDREDWEIGHT OF FODDER! AND SHE WASHES IT DOWN WITH ABOUT FIFTEEN GALLONS OF WATER.
A--A HUNDREDWEIGHT! I HAD NO IDEA--

NORMA FELT SUDDEN DESPAIR AS SHE REALISED HOW IMPOSSIBLE IT WAS TO FEED EMMA ON THEIR SLENDER RESOURCES. BUT BEN HAD A SOLUTION.

A MINUTE LATER --


WHEN NORMA AND THE OTHERS ARRIVED AT THE CIRCUS, BEN SOUGHT OUT THE PROPRIETOR. EMMA STOOD THERE, PUZZLED, AS THE PROPRIETOR EXAMINED HER KEENLY.
SHE'S IN GOOD SHAPE. YES, I'LL BE VERY GLAD TO TAKE HER FOR THE SEASON, MISS MAY. IF YOU'LL COME INTO MY OFFICE I'LL WRITE OUT A CHEQUE.

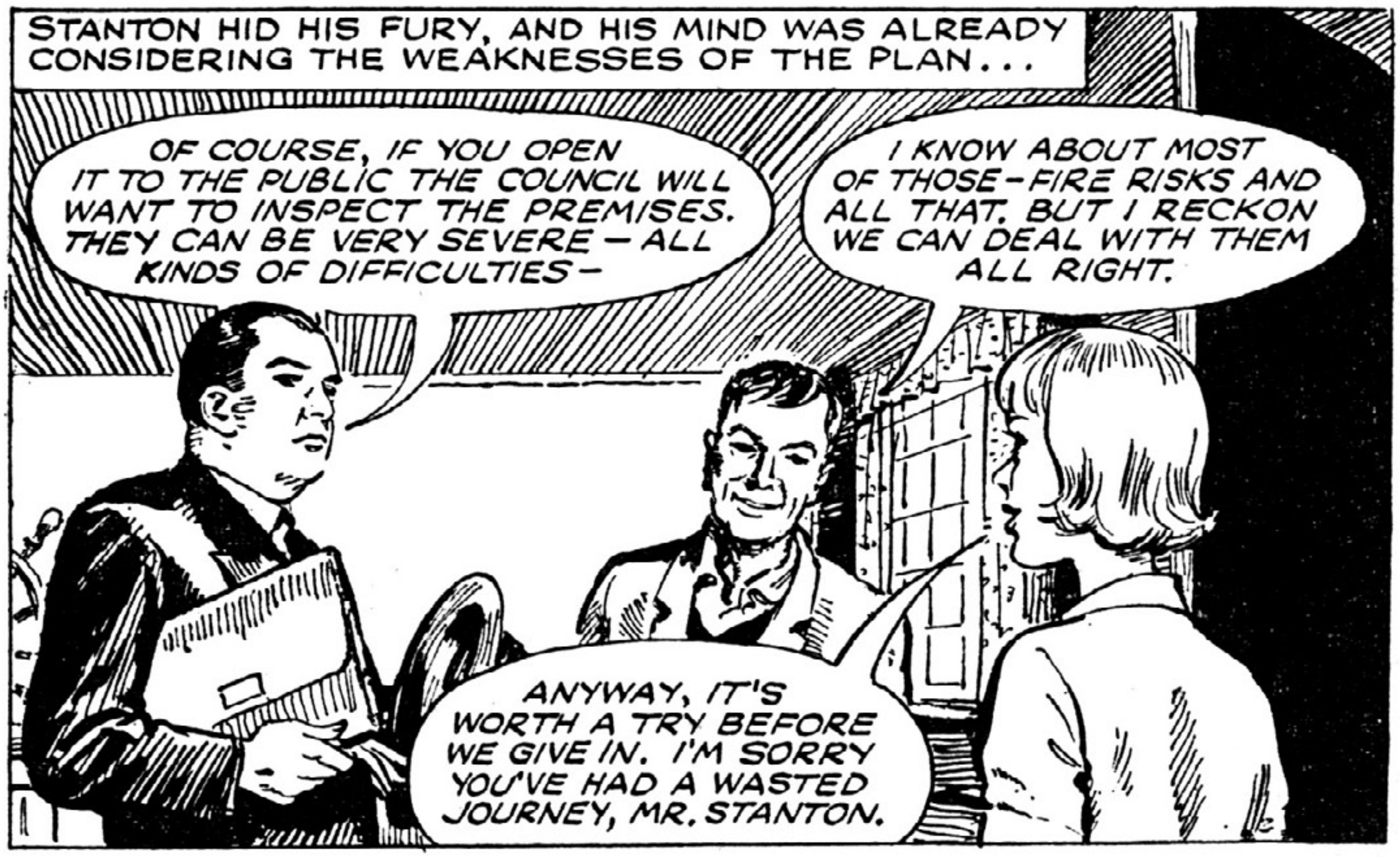
IT WAS AT THAT MOMENT THAT STANTON ARRIVED.
I CAN'T ALLOW YOU TO DO THIS, MISS MAY!
MR. STANTON! WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

I HAPPENED TO BE PASSING AND GUESSED WHAT YOU HAD IN MIND. IT IS A CONDITION OF THE INHERITANCE THAT ALL THE ANIMALS BE KEPT ON WITH THE ARK. EMMA MUST STAY WITH YOU!
LOOK, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO KEEP THE PLACE GOING, BUT THE OFFER OF SALE IS STILL OPEN. I'LL COME ROUND LATER TODAY WITH THE CONTRACT FOR YOU TO SIGN.
I SUPPOSE IT'S THE ONLY WAY...

THEY WERE QUIET AS THEY MADE THEIR WAY BACK TO THE ARK, BUT THE VILLAGE CHILDREN GREETED THEM WITH CRIES OF EXCITEMENT.
CAN WE HAVE A RIDE ON THE ELEPHANT, PLEASE?
WHOA, EMMA!
OF COURSE.
EMMA HAD A LARGE FOLLOWING BY THE TIME THEY GOT BACK—AND IT WAS THE SIGHT OF ALL THE CHILDREN THAT GAVE NORMA HER IDEA.
IF ONLY IT WORKS IT COULD SAVE NOAH'S ARK— YES, I REALLY BELIEVE IT'S THE ANSWER! I'LL TELL THE OTHERS WHEN WE GET BACK AND THEN WE CAN TALK ABOUT IT.
NEARLY THERE, KIDS.
I WANT AN EPHELUNT FOR MY BIRTHDAY!

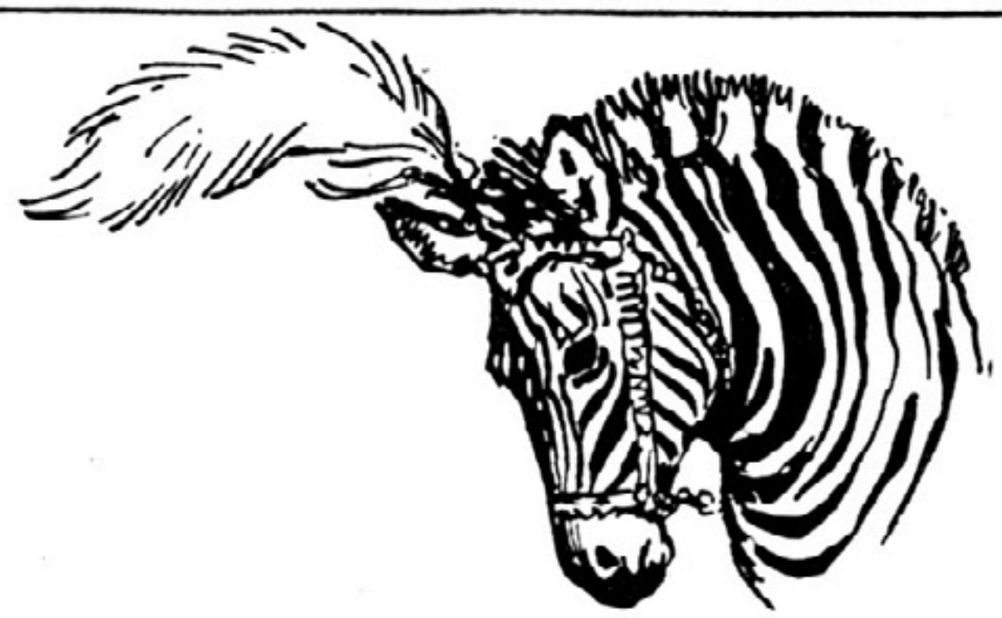
BUT THEY HAD HARDLY SAT DOWN TO TEA WHEN STANTON ARRIVED.
I DON'T WANT TO HURRY YOU, MISS MAY, BUT WE CAN'T AFFORD TO DELAY THIS SALE. HERE ARE ALL THE PAPERS...
I'VE DECIDED TO HAVE ONE MORE SHOT AT KEEPING THE ARK GOING, MR. STANTON! THERE SEEMS AN OBVIOUS WAY OF MAKING IT PAY FOR ITSELF...

I'M GOING TO OPEN THE ZOO TO THE PUBLIC! IT WILL BE A CHILDREN'S ZOO AND WE SHALL MAKE A SMALL CHARGE FOR ADMISSION.
A CHILDREN'S ZOO! THAT'S A WONDERFUL IDEA! THOSE KIDS WENT CRAZY OVER EMMA - IS THAT WHAT GAVE YOU THE IDEA? BUT JUST WAIT TILL THEY SEE ALL THE OTHER ANIMALS!
NOT BAD. NOT BAD AT ALL! WOULDN'T TAKE ME LONG TO TEACH THEM A FEW TRICKS. I RECKON IT'S WELL WORTH A TRY, MISS NORMA.


STANTON HID HIS FURY, AND HIS MIND WAS ALREADY CONSIDERING THE WEAKNESSES OF THE PLAN...
OF COURSE, IF YOU OPEN IT TO THE PUBLIC THE COUNCIL WILL WANT TO INSPECT THE PREMISES. THEY CAN BE VERY SEVERE - ALL KINDS OF DIFFICULTIES -
I KNOW ABOUT MOST OF THOSE - FIRE RISKS AND ALL THAT. BUT I RECKON WE CAN DEAL WITH THEM ALL RIGHT.
ANYWAY, IT'S WORTH A TRY BEFORE WE GIVE IN. I'M SORRY YOU'VE HAD A WASTED JOURNEY, MR. STANTON.

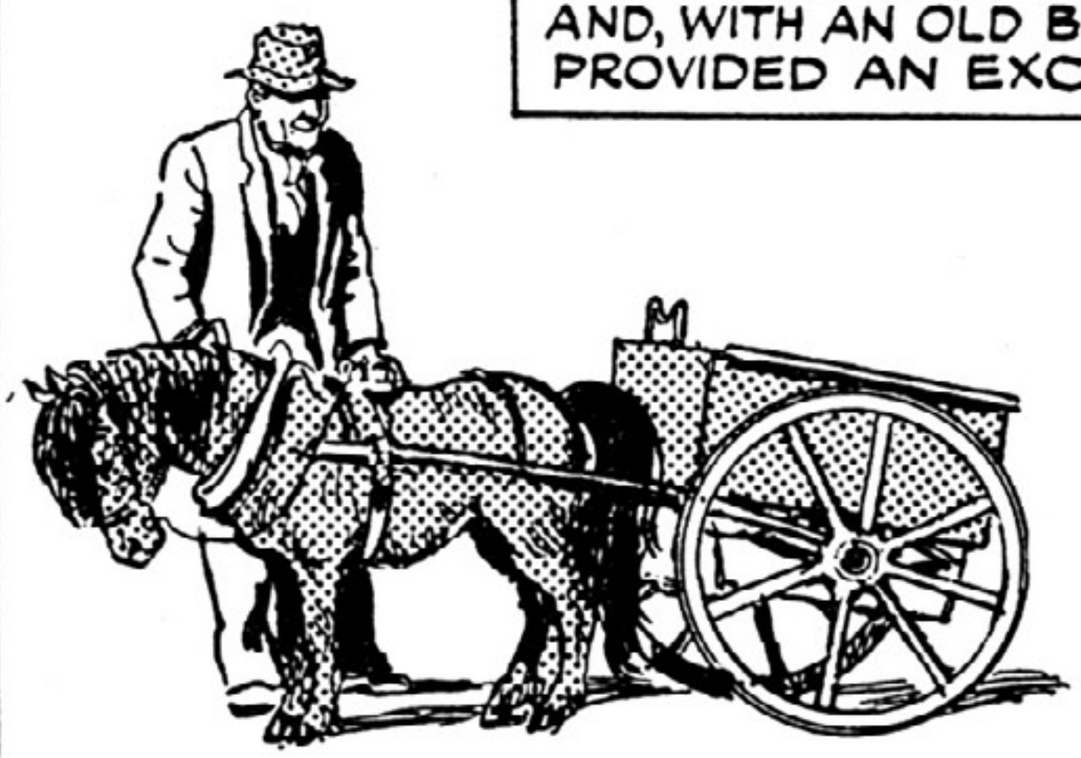
FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS THE GIRLS WERE BUSY MAKING COSTUMES, WHILE BEN WAS TEACHING THE ANIMALS THEIR PARTS....

GERTIE THE GOAT AND JACKO THE CHIMP ENJOYED THEMSELVES IMMENSELY IN A BULLFIGHTING SCENE.



ZARA THE ZEBRA WAS VERY PROUD OF HER GREAT PLUME AND BRIGHT TRAPPINGS.

THE SEALS NEEDED LITTLE TRAINING AND, WITH AN OLD BEACH BALL, SOON PROVIDED AN EXCELLENT SHOW.



A CART WAS MADE FOR SHAGGY, THE SHETLAND PONY, IN WHICH THE CHILDREN COULD RIDE.

SHEENA THE CHEETAH, HOWEVER, WHILE ESPECIALLY FRIENDLY WITH NORMA, RESISTED ALL ATTEMPTS BY BEN TO TRAIN HER.

BUT BEN WASN'T WORRIED.
NEVER MIND, THE KIDS WILL LOVE JUST TO LOOK AT SHEENA! THE FLAMINGOES ARE GOING TO BE THE BIG DRAW. I ONCE HELPED A MAN WHO TRAINED A TROUPE OF THEM AND HE TAUGHT ME THE TRICKS— YOU'LL SEE!
DON'T FORGET YOUR LUNCH, BEN. IT'LL BE READY IN TEN MINUTES.

IT WAS SOME DAYS LATER THAT BEN CALLED THE GIRLS TO WATCH THE FLAMINGO ACT.
I HONESTLY CAN'T THINK WHAT SORT OF TRICKS FLAMINGOES CAN DO. THEY'RE NOT LIKE SEALS--
JUST WAIT TILL YOU SEE 'EM— COME ON, BOTH OF YOU!

THE GIRLS WATCHED, ENTRANCED, AS BEN PUT THE BIRDS THROUGH THEIR PACES - AND EVEN JACKO WAS IMPRESSED!
COMPANY-- 'SHUN! QUICK MARCH!
WHAT FOLLOWED WAS A TRIBUTE TO BEN'S PATIENCE. THE FLAMINGOES MARCHED, TURNED, WHEELED, CHARGED AND CIRCLED TO HIS WORDS OF COMMAND.
OH, BEN, THEY'RE WONDERFUL!
COMPANY- HALT!

SUDDENLY....
BRAVO! BEST STUNT I'VE SEEN IN YEARS. MY NAME'S DICK GATES—I'M FROM THE LOCAL PAPER. I HEARD YOU WERE OPENING TO THE PUBLIC AND I CAME ALONG TO SEE WHAT WAS DOING.

MIND IF I TAKE SOME PICTURES OF THE FLAMINGO ACT? THE PUBLIC WILL LOVE IT.
GO AHEAD, MR. GATES—IT'LL BE GOOD PUBLICITY FOR US.
JUST A SECOND, AND I'LL GET 'EM SORTED OUT.
WHEN THE PICTURES HAD BEEN TAKEN....
WELL, THAT'S IT. BY THE WAY, I HEARD A WHISPER YOU WERE GETTING A VISIT FROM THE COUNCIL TOMORROW. WATCH IT! THEY'RE STICKLERS FOR REGULATIONS. GOOD LUCK!

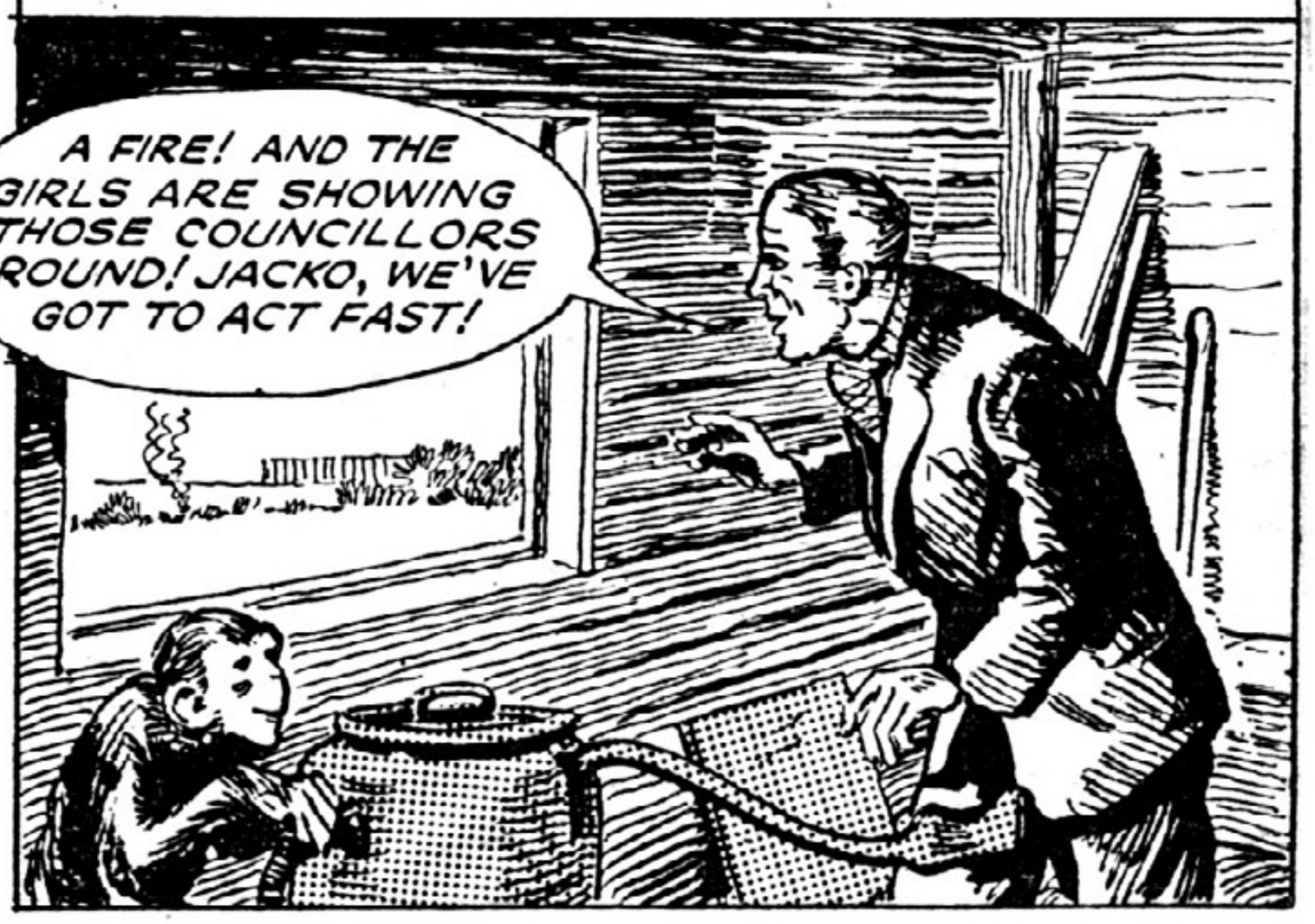
WITH ONLY TWO DAYS TO GO BEFORE THEY OPENED BEN WAS REALLY CAUGHT UP IN THE EXCITEMENT; ALL HIS OLD ENTHUSIASM FOR CIRCUS TRICKS HAD RETURNED AND HE LOOKED THOUGHTFUL OVER TEA....
WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND, BEN -- YOU WORRIED ABOUT THE INSPECTION TOMORROW?
NO, I DON'T THINK THEY'LL FIND ANY FAULT. I'M THINKING OF A LITTLE IDEA I WANT TO WORK ON FOR JACKO - BE AS GOOD AS THE FLAMINGOES--
YOU GO AHEAD WITH IT, BEN. VAL AND I WILL SHOW THE COUNCILLORS ROUND.

NEXT MORNING, WHEN LENA STANTON OPENED THE LOCAL PAPER...
YOU SEEN THIS, DAD? NORMA MAY'S ZOO HAS BEEN GIVEN A SPLASH. THERE'S A PICTURE - AND THEY'RE OPENING TOMORROW-
AND TODAY THE COUNCIL INSPECT. DON'T WORRY, LENA, THEY WON'T GET THEIR LICENCE. I SHALL SEE TO THAT!

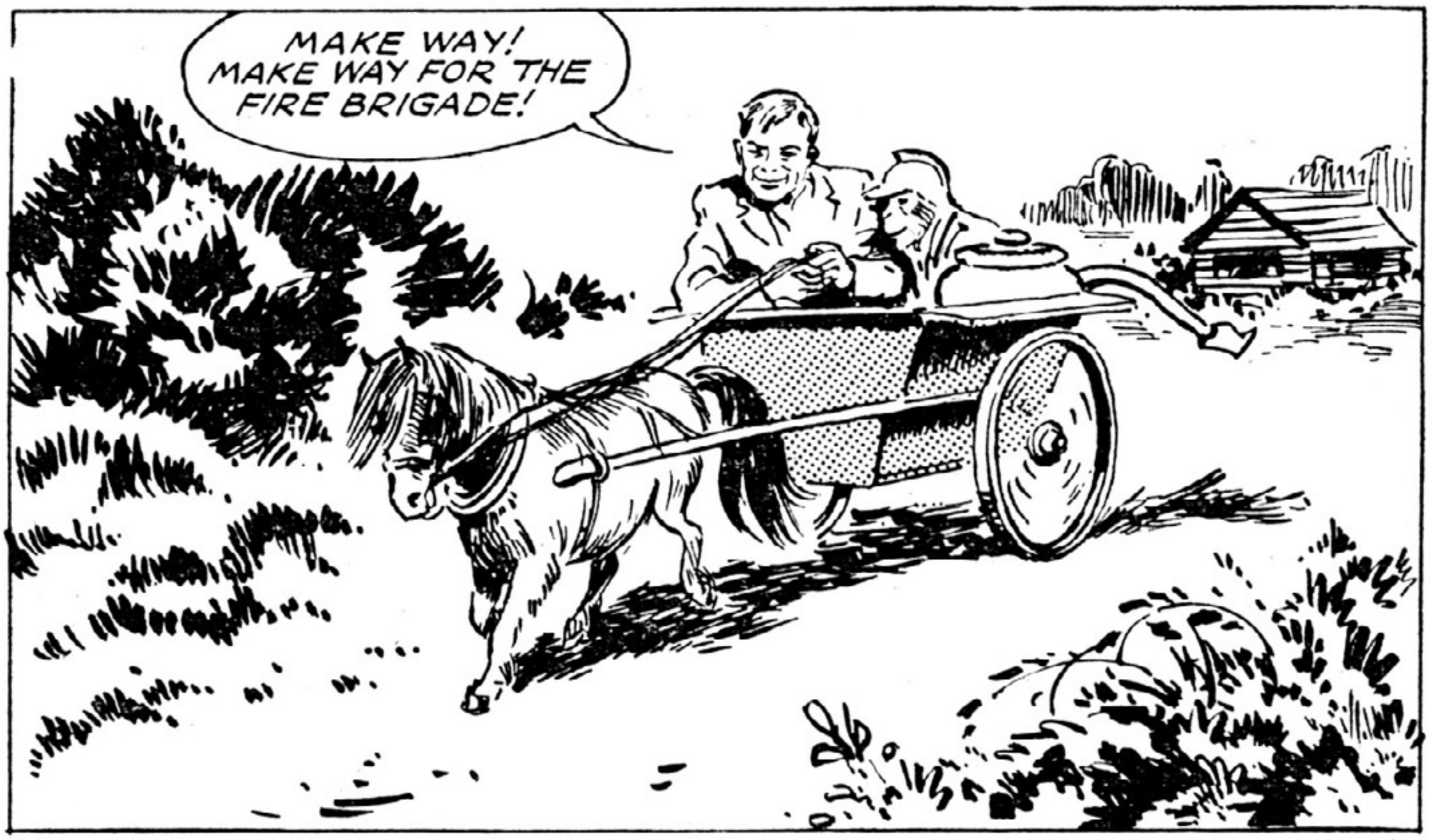
LATER THAT SAME DAY NORMA RECEIVED THE COUNCIL OFFICIALS.
GOOD AFTERNOON. PLEASE COME IN.
SO YOU'RE MISS MAY. H'M, YOU'RE VERY YOUNG TO TAKE ON SUCH A RESPONSIBILITY.

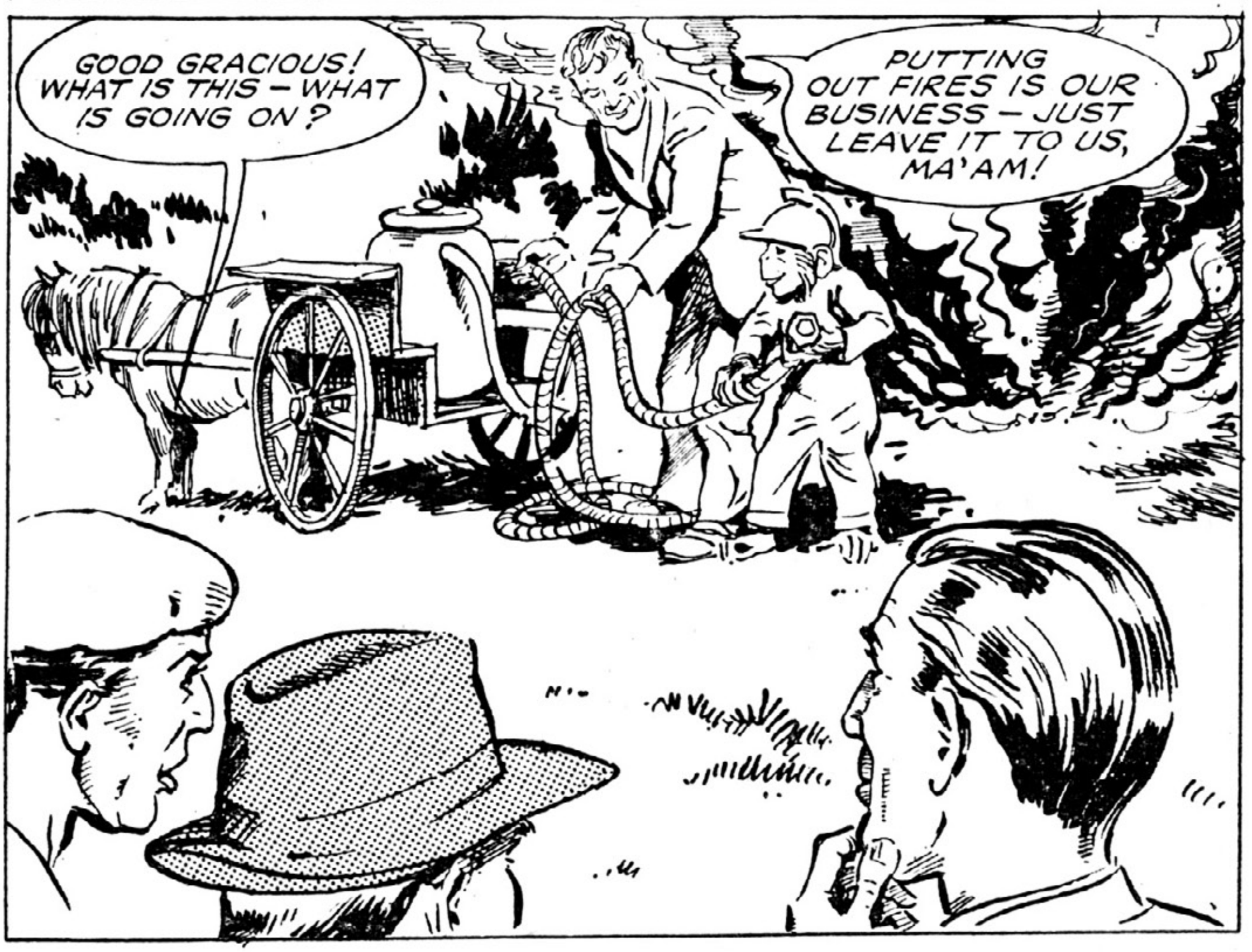
NONE OF THEM SAW WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN A FAR CORNER OF THE FIELD...

BUT BEN, WHO HAD JUST FINISHED MAKING A STRANGE CONTRAPTION AND WAS NOW BUSY TEACHING JACKO HIS PART IN IT, HAPPENED TO GLANCE UP AND SEE THE SMOKE.



NORMA AND HER PARTY SPOTTED THE FIRE A MINUTE LATER.
THE GRASS HAS CAUGHT FIRE!
DON'T WORRY, WE'LL SOON PUT IT OUT. QUICK, VAL – THE FIRE BUCKETS!
HURRY, GIRL! THE FIRE'S SPREADING!
THE BUCKETS ARE EMPTY!
WHAT ON EARTH'S HAPPENED?
FIRE
NORMA STOOD THERE IN A DAZE. THEY COULD FETCH WATER FROM THE HOUSE – THE FIRE WAS NO REAL DANGER – BUT SHE KNEW THEIR CHANCE OF GETTING A LICENCE WAS GONE; THE OFFICIALS WOULD NEVER BELIEVE THEY HAD FILLED THE BUCKETS THE PREVIOUS EVENING!
NORMA GLANCED UP SWIFTLY AT THE SOUND OF A GREAT CLANG AND CLATTER...
WHAT ON EARTH? OH, VAL, LOOK, LOOK!


MAKE WAY! MAKE WAY FOR THE FIRE BRIGADE!


GOOD GRACIOUS! WHAT IS THIS – WHAT IS GOING ON?
PUTTING OUT FIRES IS OUR BUSINESS – JUST LEAVE IT TO US, MA'AM!

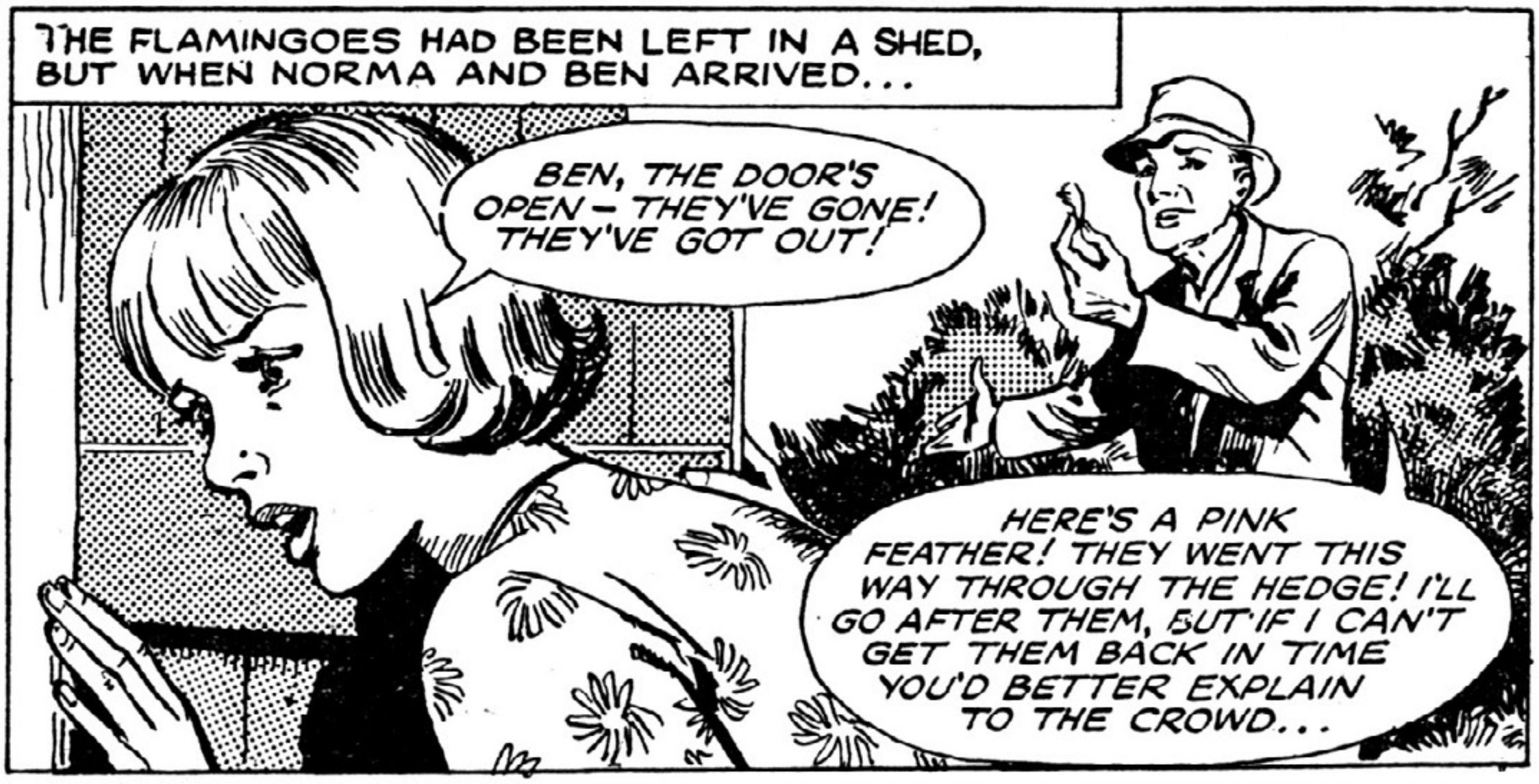
AS JACKO RAN FORWARD WITH THE HOSE, BEN STARTED TO PUMP.

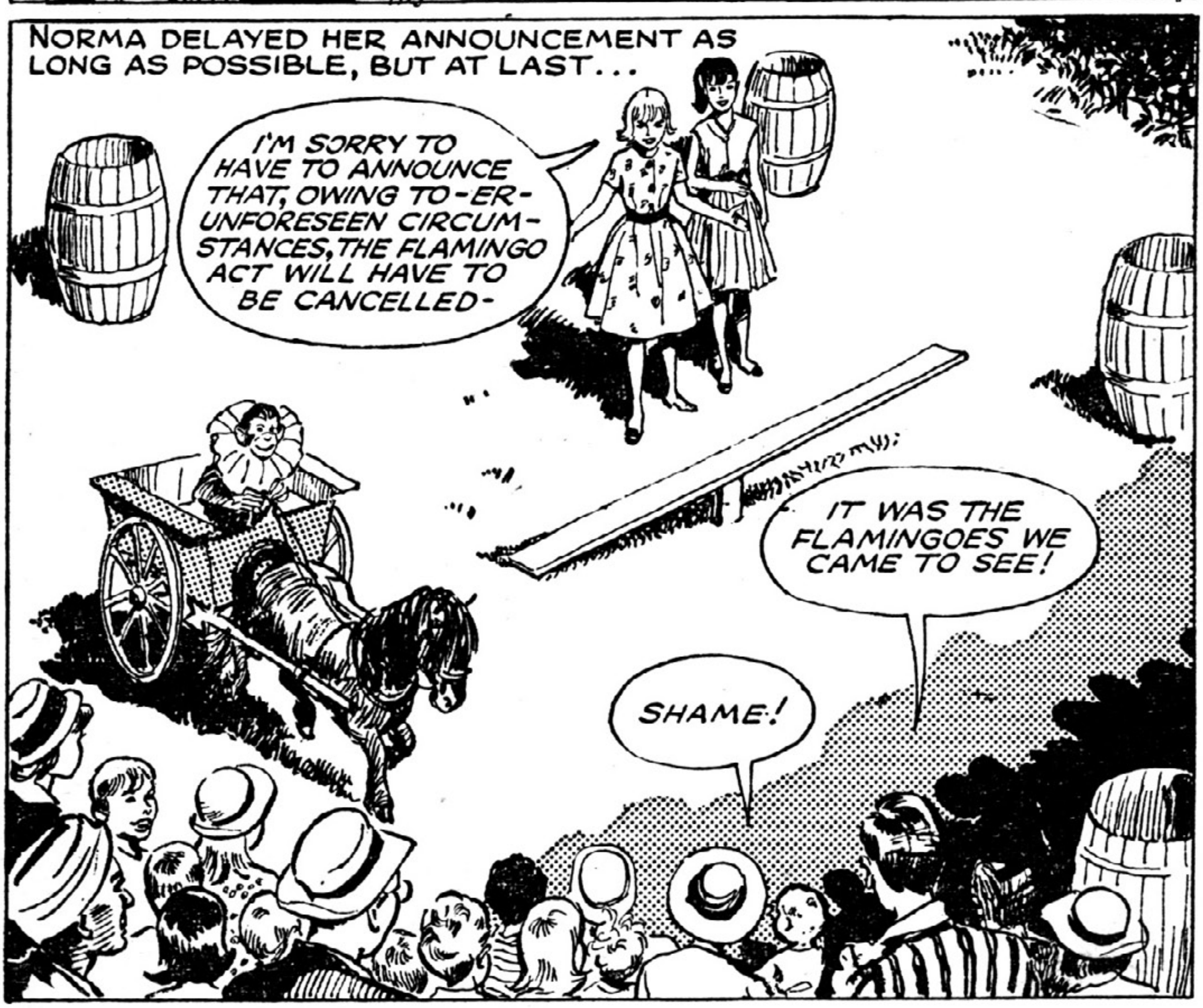
THE FIRE WAS ALMOST OUT – AND FOR GOOD MEASURE EMMA, NOT TO BE OUTDONE, CAME ALONG AND HELPED FINISH IT OFF!

IT WAS A NARROW ESCAPE AND, WHEN THE OFFICIALS WERE GONE, THEY ALL HAD A CUP OF TEA.
IT WAS A WONDERFUL IDEA OF YOURS, BEN, BUT I HATE TO THINK HOW IT MIGHT HAVE ENDED. I CAN ONLY THINK THAT EMMA MUST HAVE DRUNK THE WATER IN THE BUCKETS.
I KNEW IT'D WORK. THE CROWD WILL LOVE THAT FIRE BRIGADE SCENE.
ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL, AND TOMORROW WE OPEN—HI, TUPPENNY! TAKE YOUR HEAD OUT OF MY CUP!

BEN HAD DISTRIBUTED POSTERS IN THE VILLAGE AND, WHAT WITH THESE AND THE REPORT IN THE LOCAL PAPER, THE ZOO ATTRACTED A HUGE CROWD FOR ITS OPENING.
HOW'S IT GOING, NORMA?
GOSH, IF ONLY WE CAN PLEASE THIS CROWD, OUR TROUBLES ARE OVER!
NOAH'S ARK
SEE THE TRAINED FLAMINGOE

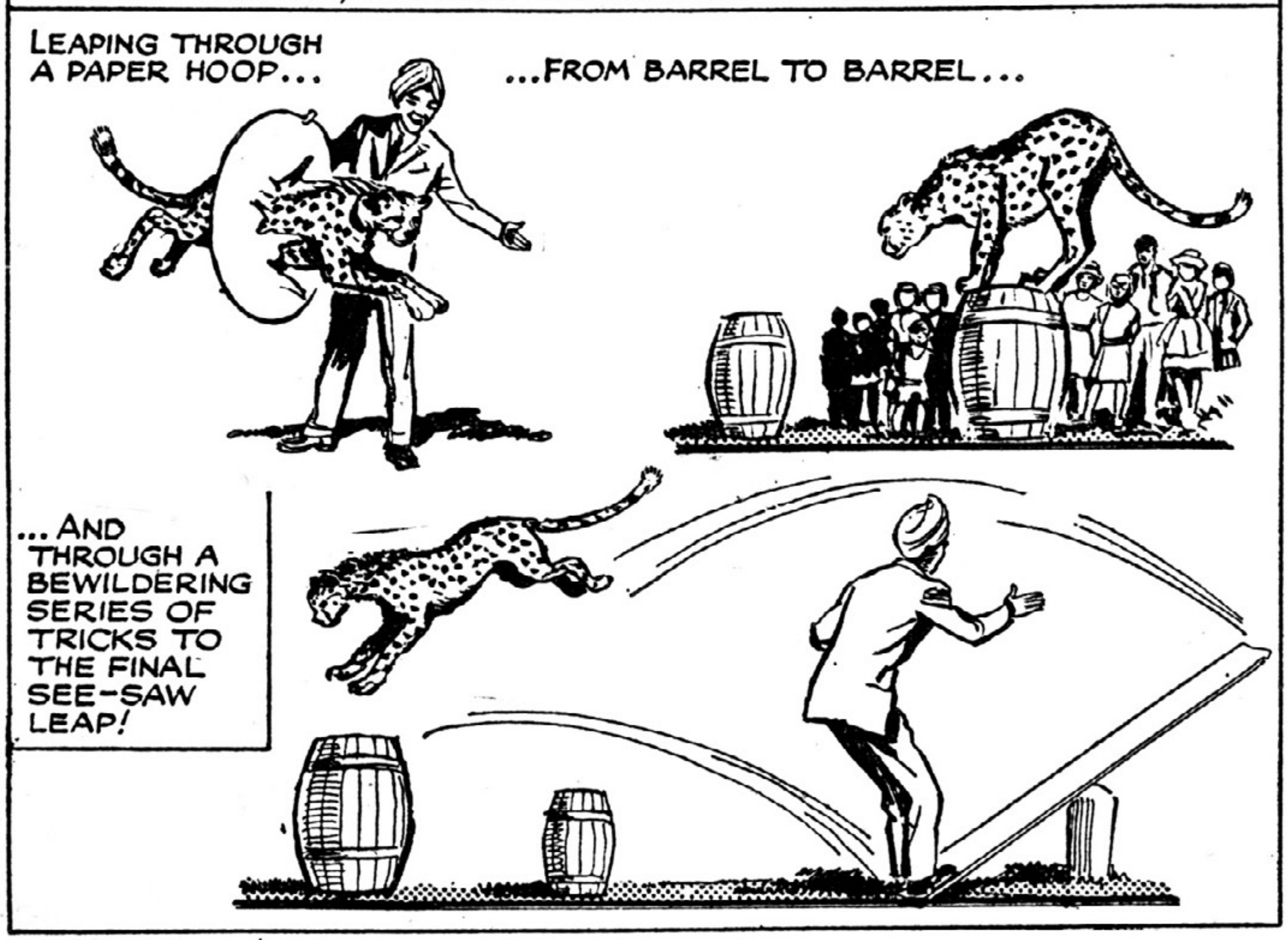
EVERYTHING WENT SPLENDIDLY, BUT IT WAS THE FLAMINGOES THAT THE GROWN-UPS HAD COME TO SEE.
THEY'VE GONE TO GET THE FLAMINGOES NOW, I BELIEVE.
SHOULD BE INTERESTING—IF THEY'RE AS GOOD AS THE REPORT SAID.


THE FLAMINGOES HAD BEEN LEFT IN A SHED, BUT WHEN NORMA AND BEN ARRIVED...
BEN, THE DOOR'S OPEN – THEY'VE GONE! THEY'VE GOT OUT!
HERE'S A PINK FEATHER! THEY WENT THIS WAY THROUGH THE HEDGE! I'LL GO AFTER THEM, BUT IF I CAN'T GET THEM BACK IN TIME YOU'D BETTER EXPLAIN TO THE CROWD...


NORMA DELAYED HER ANNOUNCEMENT AS LONG AS POSSIBLE, BUT AT LAST...
I'M SORRY TO HAVE TO ANNOUNCE THAT, OWING TO-ER-UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES, THE FLAMINGO ACT WILL HAVE TO BE CANCELLED-
IT WAS THE FLAMINGOES WE CAME TO SEE!
SHAME!

NOBODY NOTICED THE INDIAN DETACH HIMSELF QUIETLY FROM THE CROWD AND MOVE AWAY TOWARDS SHEENA'S DEN.
NORMA TRIED TO PLACATE THE CROWD, HOPING BEN MIGHT RETURN WITH THE FLAMINGOES. BUT IT WAS NO USE.
I CAN ONLY SAY I'M SORRY- IT WAS NO FAULT OF OURS. MONEY WILL BE RETURNED TO ALL THOSE WHO ARE DISSATISFIED-
I'D BETTER SEE ABOUT RETURNING THEIR MONEY AS THEY GO OUT, NORMA.
THEN, SUDDENLY...
WAIT! IN PLACE OF THE FLAMINGOES, YOU ARE PRIVILEGED TO SEE THE ONE AND ONLY-

NORMA AND VAL WERE DUMBFOUNDED. SHEENA, SO CAUTIOUS AT MAKING FRIENDS, OBEYED THE INDIAN'S EVERY GESTURE.



THE AUDIENCE WENT WILD!
AND AS THEY FILED OUT NOT A SINGLE ONE ASKED FOR HIS MONEY BACK.
WELL, I-I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT-THANK YOU FOR SAVING THE SHOW. WHAT I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IS HOW YOU GOT SHEENA TO DO ALL THAT-SHE DOESN'T USUALLY RESPOND TO STRANGERS.
SHEENA AND I ARE NOT STRANGERS-- WE ARE OLD FRIENDS, YOU SEE, MY MASTER, THE RAJAH OF RAJIPORE, PRESENTED HIM TO YOUR UNCLE.
I CAME TO CLIFFDENE TO ARRANGE FOR THE VISIT OF MY MASTER. HE WAS GRIEVED TO HEAR OF YOUR UNCLE'S DEATH, BUT SOON HE WILL COME TO SEE YOU AND CLAIM THE GREAT EMERALD WHICH YOUR UNCLE TOOK INTO HIS SAFE-KEEPING DURING TIMES OF TROUBLE IN MY COUNTRY.
GREAT EMERALD? BUT-BUT UNCLE LEFT NO MENTION OF ANY EMERALD!

YOUR UNCLE REVEALED ITS HIDING PLACE ONLY TO MY MASTER. WHEN HE ARRIVES I TAKE YOU TO HIM. GOODBYE— AND I AM GLAD I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO HELP YOU IN YOUR DIFFICULTY.

WELL, WHAT D'YOU MAKE OF THAT?
SEARCH ME. WE CAN ONLY WAIT FOR HIS LORDSHIP TO TURN UP, I SUPPOSE — HALLO, HERE'S BEN. DID YOU FIND THE FLAMINGOES, BEN?
I FOUND THEM, YES. BUT THEY DIDN'T GET OUT OF THAT SHED ACCIDENTALLY. SOMEONE LURED THEM AWAY WITH FISH, AND WHOEVER IT WAS WORE GLOVES -- AND THEY DROPPED ONE! TAKE A LOOK AT THE INITIALS ON IT.

L.S. THAT COULD BE THAT GIRL LENA STANTON! BUT WHY ON EARTH SHOULD SHE TRY TO RUIN OUR SHOW?
COULD BE. AND THE FIRE THAT BROKE OUT WHILE THE COUNCILLORS WERE INSPECTING . . . I THOUGHT IT FUNNY AT THE TIME – I'LL BET STANTON WAS BEHIND THAT, TOO!
GOSH, IS IT POSSIBLE THE STANTONS KNOW SOMETHING OF THIS EMERALD – KNOW THAT IT'S HIDDEN SOMEWHERE IN THE ARK? THAT COULD BE WHY THEY WANT ME OUT – – THEY COULD BE AIMING TO BUY IT THEMSELVES AND SEARCH FOR THE EMERALD!
I VOTE WE SEARCH FOR THE EMERALD THIS EVENING! THERE ARE LOTS OF THINGS IN THE ARK I HAVEN'T EXAMINED CLOSELY YET.
BUT THOUGH THEY SEARCHED THOROUGHLY NOTHING CAME TO LIGHT. THEN . . .
LOOK, TUPPENNY'S FOUND SOMETHING!

BUT TUPPENNY WASN'T REALLY INTERESTED IN EMERALDS...
A BISCUIT! ALL RIGHT, YOU FUNNY THING, I SUPPOSE YOU'D BETTER HAVE IT.
WELL, WE'LL JUST HAVE TO WAIT TILL THE RAJAH COMES. BEN'S GOING TO GROOM SHEENA IN THE MORNING READY FOR HER MEETING WITH HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS.

MEANWHILE LENA REPORTED ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED TO HER FATHER.
HOW WAS I TO KNOW THE INDIAN WOULD TURN UP? I GOT RID OF THE FLAMINGOES AS YOU TOLD ME. BUT LISTEN, THAT INDIAN COMES FROM THE RAJAH— THE RAJAH'S ON HIS WAY HERE TO RECLAIM THE EMERALD!

THEN WE'RE BEATEN, AND TO THINK WE HAD THE ARK TO OURSELVES BEFORE NORMA MAY ARRIVED — WENT THROUGH IT WITH A FINE TOOTH COMB AND FOUND NOTHING!

IF ONLY WE COULD HAVE BOUGHT THE PLACE, WE COULD HAVE TAKEN IT APART — OLD NOAH MUST HAVE THE EMERALD IN A SECRET WALL CAVITY OR SOMETHING.
THE RAJAH KNOWS — I HEARD THEM SAY. I SUPPOSE NOAH GOT IN TOUCH WITH HIM.

STANTON LOOKED UP QUICKLY.
THE RAJAH KNOWS, EH? HE'LL TELL NORMA MAY THE SECRET AND SHE WILL HAND THE EMERALD OVER TO HIM. YES, THAT'S IT, AND IF WE PLAY OUR CARDS RIGHT I FANCY WE CAN STILL WIN!
THE NEXT DAY THE VILLAGERS WERE AGOG AS A HUGE CAR DROVE UP TO THE LOCAL INN. OUT OF IT STEPPED THE RAJAH OF RAJIPORE, FOLLOWED BY HIS SERVANTS.
INN
WELCOME, MASTER. ALL IS PREPARED, AND IF IT PLEASES YOU I WILL GO NOW AND BRING MISS NORMA MAY AND HER FRIENDS.
PLEASE DO, SINGHALI. TELL THEM I WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE THEM AND PAY MY RESPECTS TO THE NIECE OF MY OLD FRIEND.

LENA AND HER FATHER WERE IN THE CROWD THAT HAD GATHERED.
YOU HEARD THAT, LENA? WE HAVEN'T MUCH TIME.
I HOPE THIS IS GOING TO WORK.

BUT IF LENA STANTON WAS NERVOUS SHE DIDN'T SHOW IT AS SHE AND HER FATHER ENTERED THE ROOMS TAKEN BY THE RAJAH'S ENTOURAGE.
HIS HIGHNESS WILL BE EXPECTING US, I THINK. MY NAME IS STANTON – I WAS MR. NOAH MAY'S SOLICITOR. AND THIS IS – MISS NORMA MAY.
13

THE RAJAH HAD HEARD AND HURRIED FORWARD.
I HAVE JUST SENT MY SERVANT TO FETCH YOU. AH, IT IS INDEED A GREAT HONOUR TO MEET THE NIECE OF MY OLD AND TRUSTED FRIEND.
YOUR SERVANT EXPLAINED TO MISS MAY ABOUT THE EMERALD, YOUR HIGHNESS, AND SHE IS MOST ANXIOUS THAT IT SHOULD BE HANDED OVER TO YOU WITHOUT DELAY.
THAT CAN WAIT. FIRST WE WILL CELEBRATE THIS MEETING, TO WHICH I HAVE SO MUCH LOOKED FORWARD.
YOUR HIGHNESS, I WOULD PREFER TO FETCH THE EMERALD FIRST. I SHAN'T BE HAPPY UNTIL IT'S -ER- SAFELY IN YOUR HANDS. IF YOU WILL JUST TELL ME WHERE MY UNCLE KEPT IT--

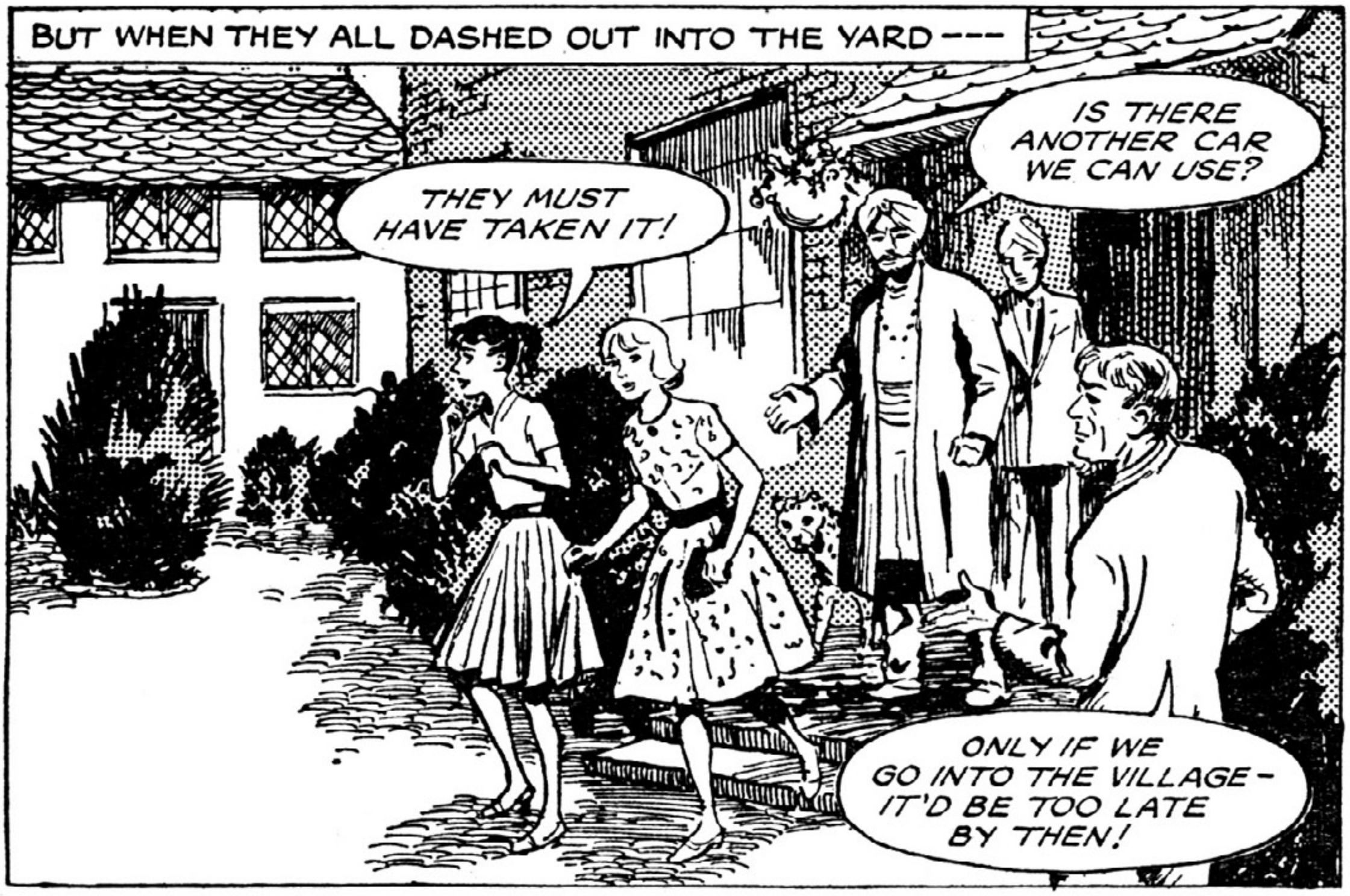
IT SHALL BE AS YOU WISH. YOU WILL FIND THE EMERALD IN A ROCK CAVITY AT THE BACK OF THE CHEETAH'S DEN. SHEENA, YOU SEE, HAS BEEN USED AS THE GUARDIAN OF THIS PRICELESS JEWEL!
I SEE. SHEENA'S DEN. YES, I WILL FETCH IT AT ONCE!

BUT ONCE OUTSIDE...
WELL, WE CAN SAY GOODBYE TO THE EMERALD! I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE NEAR THAT CHEETAH'S DEN--
QUICK! OUT OF SIGHT!

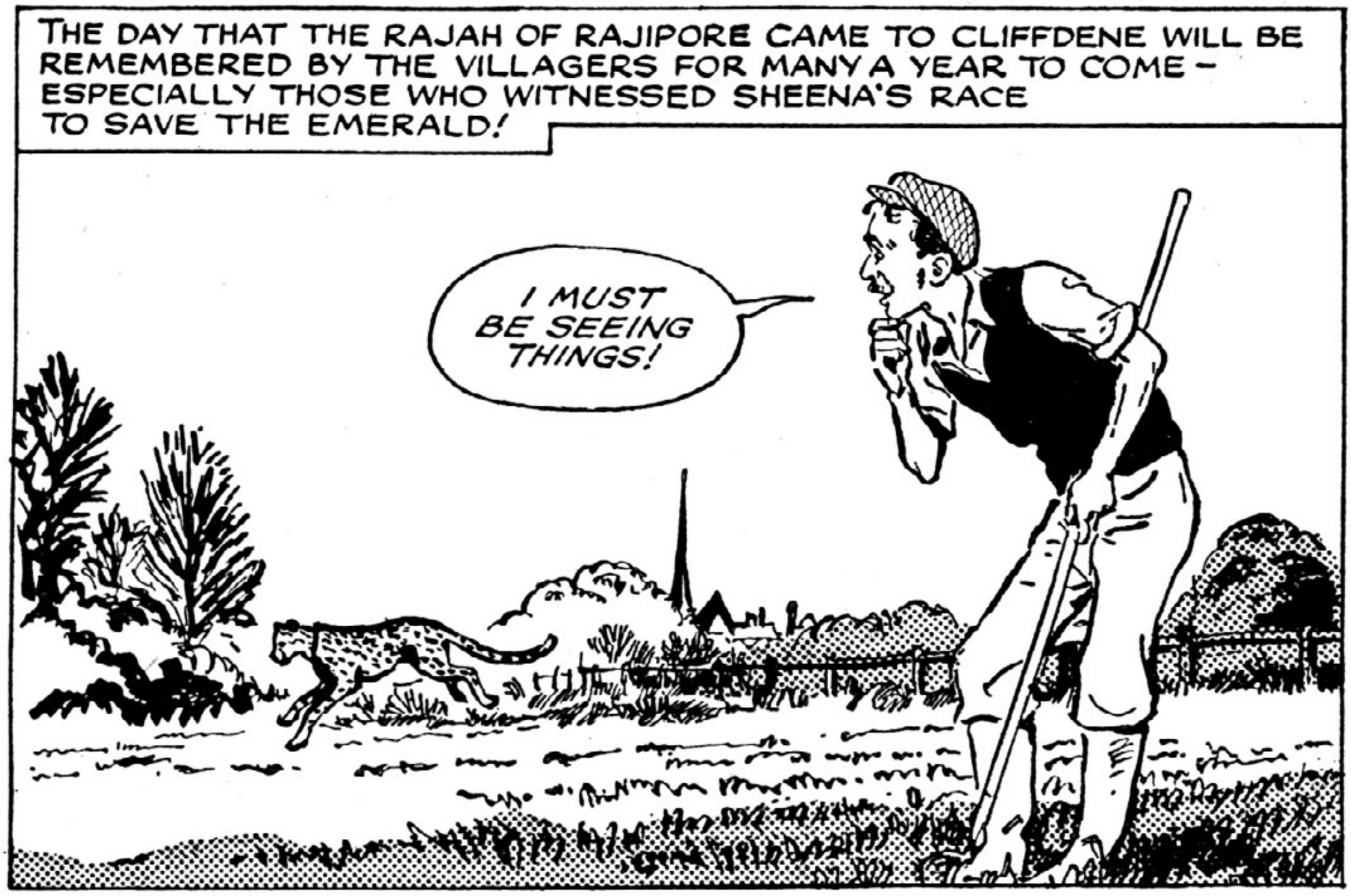
THE RAJAH'S CAR HAD DRAWN INTO THE YARD. OUT OF IT STEPPED NORMA AND VAL, WITH BEN AND - SHEENA!
WHAT LUCK THEY DIDN'T KNOW THE CHEETAH WAS THERE TO GUARD THE STONE! WAIT FOR THEM TO GO INSIDE, LENA, BEFORE WE MAKE A MOVE.

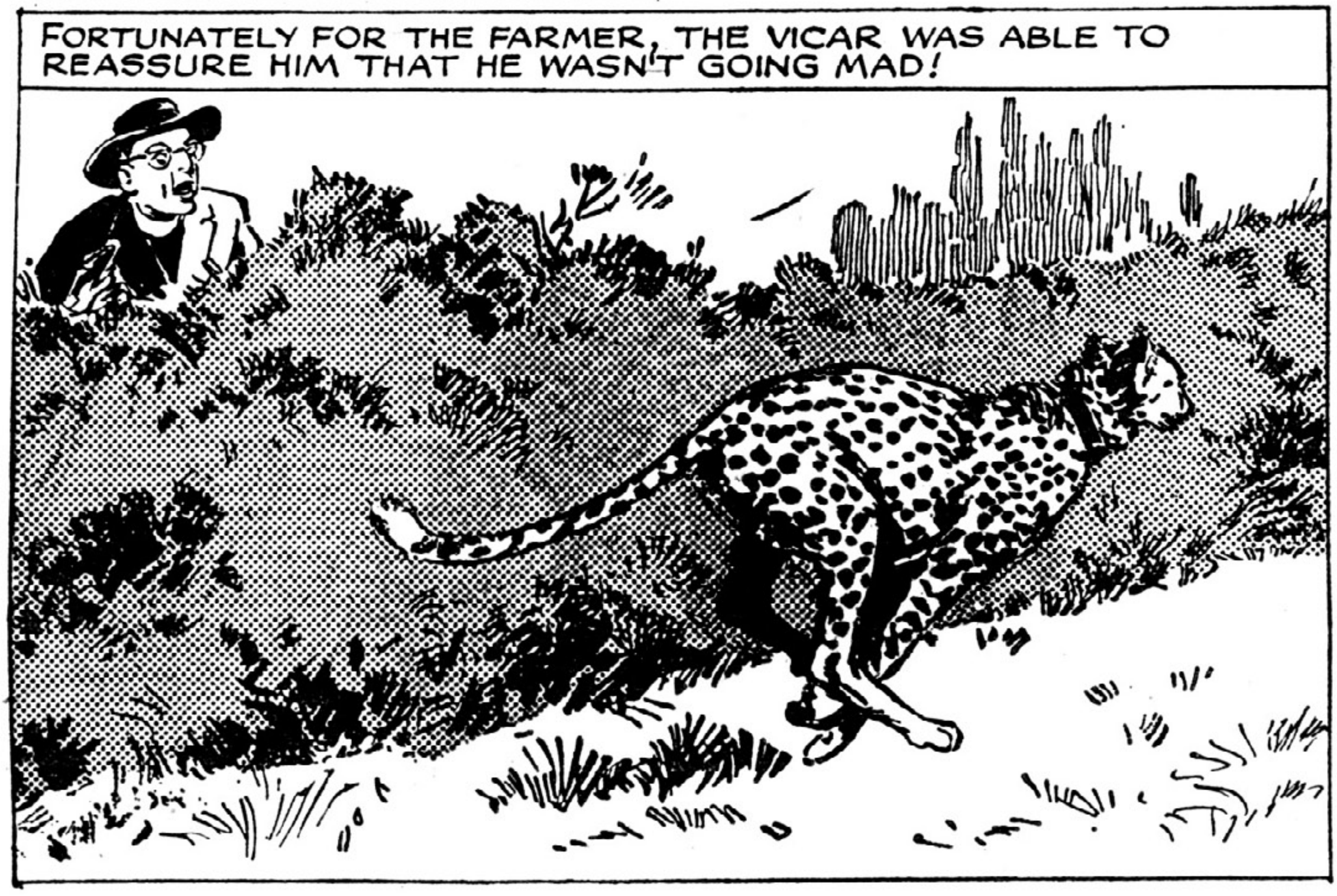
NORMA HAD THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A NICE GESTURE TO BRING SHEENA TO MEET HER OLD MASTER. SHE WASN'T PREPARED FOR THE WELCOME SHE RECEIVED...
BUT WHAT IS THIS? YOU ARE NOT NORMA MAY! SHE HAS JUST VISITED ME, WITH A MR. STANTON!
STANTON! IT MUST HAVE BEEN LENA! YOUR HIGHNESS, YOU'VE BEEN TRICKED! THAT MAN AND GIRL — I BELIEVE THEY'RE AFTER THE EMERALD!

THE EMERALD! AND I TOLD THEM WHERE IT WAS HIDDEN!
THERE MIGHT STILL BE TIME! THE CAR—


BUT WHEN THEY ALL DASHED OUT INTO THE YARD---
THEY MUST HAVE TAKEN IT!
IS THERE ANOTHER CAR WE CAN USE?
ONLY IF WE GO INTO THE VILLAGE - IT'D BE TOO LATE BY THEN!

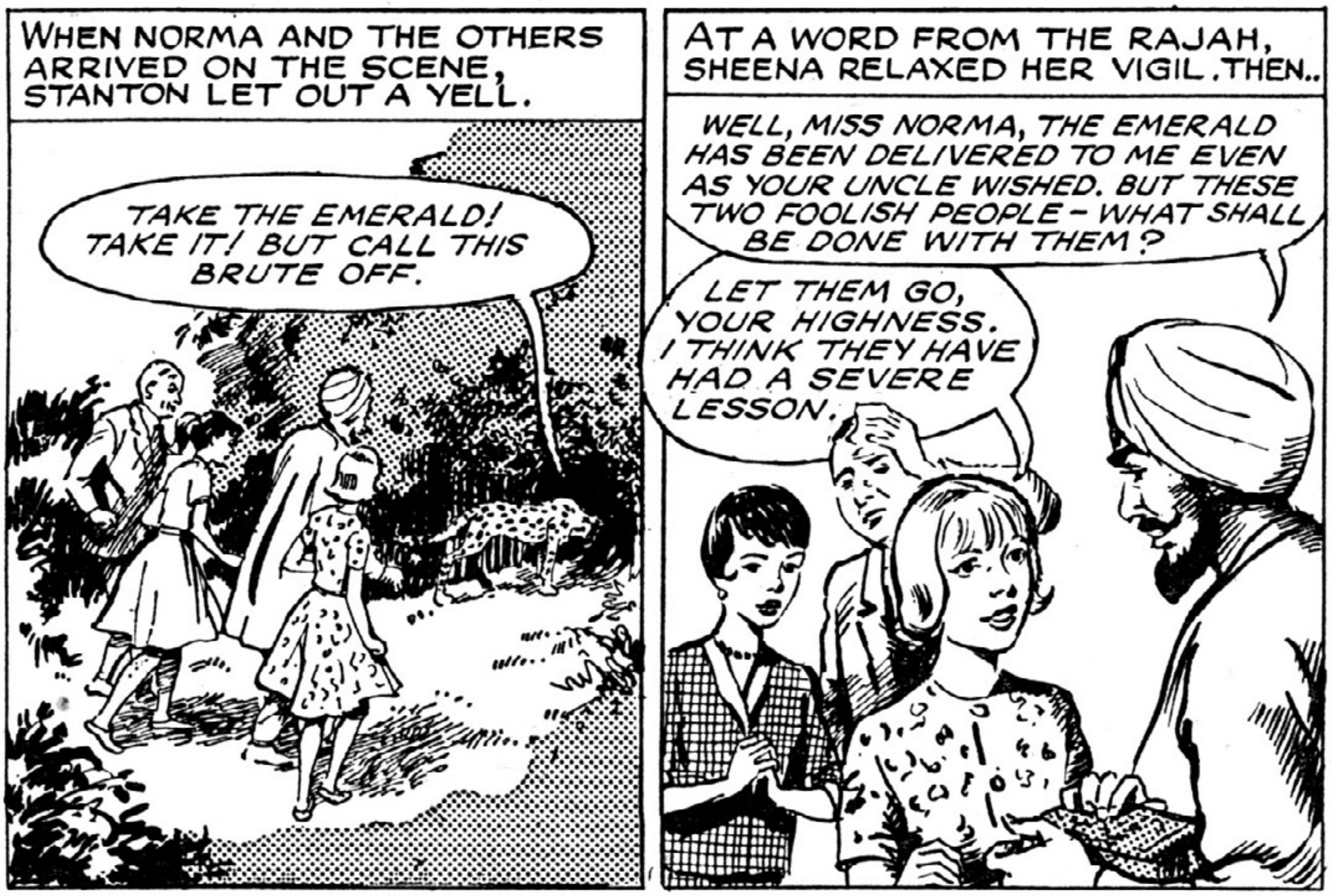
CALMLY THE RAJAH TURNED TO SHEENA AND SPOKE SOFTLY IN A STRANGE TONGUE. THE CHEETAH TURNED AND MADE OFF LIKE A SWIFT AND SILENT SHADOW.
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
I THINK THOSE TWO PEOPLE MIGHT BE IN FOR A SURPRISE. THE CHEETAH - SHE IS THE FASTEST OF ANIMALS - AND I SENT HER BACK TO HER DEN! NOW WE SHALL ORDER A CAR.


THE DAY THAT THE RAJAH OF RAJIPORE CAME TO CLIFFDENE WILL BE REMEMBERED BY THE VILLAGERS FOR MANY A YEAR TO COME – ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO WITNESSED SHEENA'S RACE TO SAVE THE EMERALD!
I MUST BE SEEING THINGS!


FORTUNATELY FOR THE FARMER, THE VICAR WAS ABLE TO REASSURE HIM THAT HE WASN'T GOING MAD!

THE TWO PEOPLE DESTINED FOR THE GREATEST SHOCK OF ALL HAD CONFIDENTLY ENTERED THE CHEETAH'S DEN.
LOOK! IT'S THE SIGN THE RAJAH WORE ON HIS TURBAN. THIS MUST BE THE PLACE --
STANTON REMOVED THE ROCK TO REVEAL A WOODEN CASKET. WITH TREMBLING FINGERS HE UNFASTENED THE LID...
THE EMERALD! WORTH A KING'S RANSOM!

A SOUND FROM THE ENTRANCE BROUGHT THEM SWINGING ROUND.
IT'S THE CHEETAH - WE'RE TRAPPED!
DON'T MOVE, LENA. KEEP PERFECTLY STILL! IF SHE SO MUCH AS THINKS WE ARE TRYING TO GET AWAY--


WHEN NORMA AND THE OTHERS ARRIVED ON THE SCENE, STANTON LET OUT A YELL.
TAKE THE EMERALD! TAKE IT! BUT CALL THIS BRUTE OFF.
AT A WORD FROM THE RAJAH, SHEENA RELAXED HER VIGIL. THEN..
WELL, MISS NORMA, THE EMERALD HAS BEEN DELIVERED TO ME EVEN AS YOUR UNCLE WISHED. BUT THESE TWO FOOLISH PEOPLE - WHAT SHALL BE DONE WITH THEM?
LET THEM GO, YOUR HIGHNESS. I THINK THEY HAVE HAD A SEVERE LESSON.

LATER, AT A PARTY GIVEN BY THE RAJAH . . .
WHEN I RETURN TO MY COUNTRY I SHALL HAVE MORE ANIMALS SENT TO YOUR ZOO. IT SHALL BE THE BEST PRIVATE ZOO IN THE COUNTRY—A REWARD I INTENDED MAKING TO YOUR UNCLE NOAH, WHO WOULD HAVE INDEED BEEN PROUD OF YOU, NORMA.
THANK YOU, YOUR HIGHNESS.

AND THE NEXT DAY . . .
IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOU AND BEN, I COULDN'T HAVE WON THROUGH, VAL. YOU'VE GOT TO PROMISE THAT AS SOON AS YOU FINISH SCHOOL YOU'LL COME BACK!
WILD HORSES WOULDN'T KEEP ME AWAY!

BEN HAS ALREADY AGREED TO STAY, SO THAT MAKES THREE OF US. UNCLE NOAH'S INHERITANCE HAS TURNED OUT TO BE A MOST WONDERFUL THING! I LOVE THIS PLACE. IT'S SO PEACEFUL...
HI! HI, STOP!
WHAT ON EARTH-!

JACKO, YOU RASCAL! HE'S WEARING YOUR SCHOOL HAT, VAL
HE THINKS HE SHOULD BE WEARING A UNIFORM EVEN WHEN HE'S NOT GIVING A SHOW!
WISH WE COULD SEND HIM BACK TO SCHOOL IN MY PLACE! I KNOW, NORMA, LET'S HAVE A PARTY FOR THE PETS BEFORE I GO BACK!

NOW PLEASE TURN OVER FOR PATTI'S PAGE

A LETTER FROM PATTI

the youngest girl in the office

Hello again, girls !

I was talking to my cousin the other day (she lives in the country and likes to ask about life in London), and she said, " I suppose you've got lots of friends ?" " About four hundred thousand, I think," I replied, and she gave me a funny look.

But I wasn't joking ; I was referring to the readers of Schoolgirls Picture Library. I simply love reading all your letters and I only wish I could reply to each and every one of them ! But if I stayed up all night I couldn't hope to do that, so though I address this monthly letter to all our readers it's really meant for YOU !

Now here's a message our editor asked me to pass on. He wants me to thank you all for being such loyal readers and to say that he is doing his best to include in future libraries many of the stories you have asked for.

And that leaves such little space that I might as well finish with a message from Stevie (my kid brother). He says he hopes you won't mind if he claims you as HIS friends, too—so that he can tell his schoolmates that he has four hundred thousand girlfriends ! What a boaster !

Yours,

Patti

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SG

What was the secret of the old wreck ?

Penny, Vic and Gerry investigate in . . .

"THE CLOCKWORK FISH MYSTERY"

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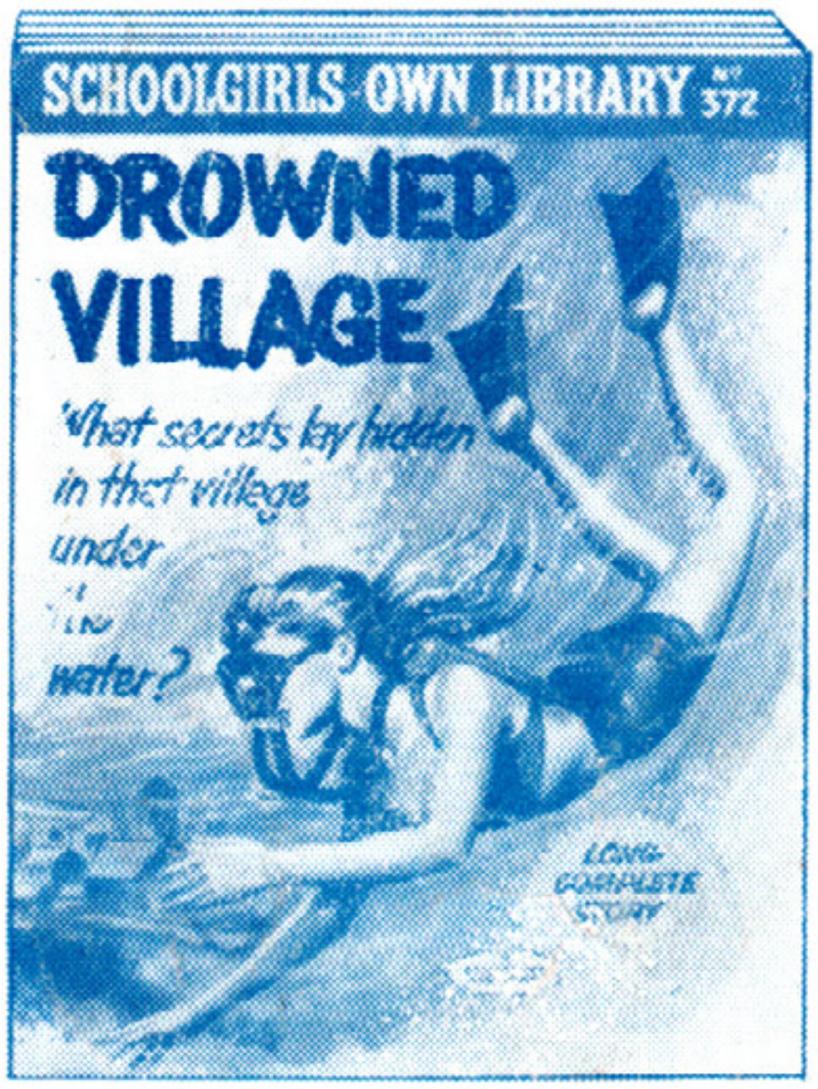

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